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General Assembly
Sixty-second session

Official Records

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Monday, 12 November 2007, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kerim .... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

The President: I wish to inform members of the reason for the delay in convening today's plenary meeting. I have been advised by United Nations Security and Safety Service that during its routine sweep of the General Assembly Hall, the canine handlers noticed an ash-like substance in the Hall. The United Nations hazmat team collected the substance and cleansed the area. The team has since declared the substance to be not dangerous.

Agenda item 111

Notification by the Secretary-General under Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations

Note by the Secretary-General (A/62/300)

The President: As members are aware, in accordance with the provisions of Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations and with the consent of the Security Council, the Secretary-General is mandated to notify the General Assembly of matters relative to the maintenance of international peace and security that are being dealt with by the Security Council and of matters with which the Council has ceased to deal.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the document before it on this item?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 111?

It was so decided.

Agenda items 9 and 122

Report of the Security Council (A/62/2)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

The President: Today the Assembly will consider the item entitled "Report of the Security Council". I hope that our consideration of the item will contribute to strengthening relations between the General Assembly and the Security Council so that together both bodies can better promote the values and principles of the United Nations.

We will also consider the agenda item entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". In the 14 years since this matter has been under discussion in the Open-ended Working Group, we have realized the complexity, sensitivity and growing relevance of Security Council reform.

At the 2005 World Summit, world leaders recognized the importance of making progress on Security Council reform an essential element of the overall efforts to reform the United Nations. They committed to support early reform of the Council in order to make it more representative, efficient and

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transparent and to further enhance its effectiveness and the legitimacy of its decisions.

To further those goals, world leaders also supported efforts to adapt the working methods of the Security Council, by increasing the involvement of States which are not members of the Council.

In her speech to the General Assembly on 11 December 2006 (see A/61/PV.72), President Al-Khalifa urged the membership to take a fresh and open-minded approach to the issue of Security Council reform. Progress has been achieved and I would encourage the membership to continue in that spirit. As a result of the comprehensive consultation processes that have been conducted during the sixty-first session, we now have a clear understanding of the positions and views of all Member States, as well as the valuable reports of the facilitators.

Taking into account the progress achieved so far, the membership agreed to consider the issue during the sixty-second session so that further concrete results may be achieved, including through intergovernmental negotiations. Through these efforts Member States have reached a new stage that offers the prospect of achieving the goal of comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

I wish to assure you of my determination to work with all of you in an open and transparent manner to establish the most appropriate process, based on the views of the entire membership. Since the beginning of the sixty-second session I have held informal consultations with all interested parties. Member States have articulated their preparedness, taking into account the progress achieved, to use the current momentum to move forward. Based on those consultations, our objective should be to develop a framework in order to begin intergovernmental negotiations by identifying and reaching agreement on the various negotiable elements. In that respect, we should be guided by the report of the Working Group (A/61/47), which the Assembly adopted on 17 September 2007, and the positions and proposals of Member States.

Member States should have primary ownership and responsibility over such a process. I therefore look forward to hearing your substantive proposals and views on how to embark on the next stage in this important process so that we can achieve concrete results during the sixty-second session.

We must bear in mind that Security Council reform is an integral part of strengthening the United Nations. I would therefore encourage all Member States to remain actively engaged and committed to addressing this issue. As President of the General Assembly I only have one request: that we work together in good faith with a view to achieving tangible results with the broadest possible agreement during this session. And as the ancients would say, "*Hic Rhodus, hic salta*": in essence, actions speak louder than words.

I now give the floor to the President of the Security Council, His Excellency Mr. Marty Natalegawa, to introduce the report of the Security Council.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): On behalf of all members of the Security Council, I would like to congratulate you on your election as President of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly. We are hopeful that under your able stewardship, we will be able to enlarge the cooperation between the Security Council and the General Assembly.

In my capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of November, it is my honour to introduce the annual report of the Council to the General Assembly, document A/62/2. This report covers the period 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007.

The annual report demonstrates a diverse agenda for the Council. The programme is vast and encompasses all major regions of the globe as well as a wide array of cross-cutting thematic issues, including the strengthening of international law, cooperation with regional organizations in peace and security and the protection of civilians in armed conflict, to mention just a few of the issues involved. The Council has on its programme of work all major aspects of the maintenance of international peace and security, including armed conflicts, threats to peace and security posed by terrorist acts, as well as issues dealing with peacekeeping operations by the United Nations and related actors, and post-conflict peacebuilding. It is an ambitious but important agenda, one which we hope will be strengthened by collaboration with our partners, including the General Assembly.

During the reporting period, the Council held 224 formal meetings, 184 of which were public, as well as 22 meetings with troop-contributing countries. There were 192 consultations of the whole, and the Council adopted 71 resolutions and 52 presidential statements.

Developments in Africa were extensively discussed throughout the year. The issue of Darfur was highlighted. There were close consultations on that issue between the Council, the United Nations Secretariat, the African Union (AU) and the Government of the Sudan. Six resolutions were passed, including resolution 1769 (2007), which authorized the establishment of a United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur. The Council received two briefings by International Criminal Court Prosecutor Moreno-Ocampo on the situation in Darfur.

On 6 February 2007, the Secretary-General briefed the Council about his meetings at the AU summit in Addis Ababa with leaders of several African countries. The Secretary-General said it was essential to support peacekeeping in Darfur and the agreements reached in Addis Ababa and Abuja. An agreement was reached between the United Nations and the AU to revive the peace process by conducting a joint mission in the Sudan with special envoys Jan Eliasson and Salim Ahmed Salim. On 30 April, the Council adopted resolution 1755 (2007), which extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan until 31 October 2007.

On Côte d'Ivoire, the Council convened a number of meetings and agreed on several measures, including the adoption of resolutions 1708 (2006) and 1761 (2007), which extended the mandate of the group of experts monitoring the implementation of sanctions related to Côte d'Ivoire; resolution 1721 (2006), aimed at implementing fully the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire and organizing free, fair, open and transparent elections in that country; and resolution 1765 (2007), which renewed the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire.

The Council welcomed positive developments in peacebuilding in Sierra Leone, while stressing the need to address the root causes of the conflict, and guaranteed the conduct of free, fair and democratic elections in the country. The Council also welcomed the progress achieved by the Special Court for Sierra Leone and reiterated its support for that body. Furthermore, through resolution 1734 (2006), the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone.

The sanctions regime concerning Liberia was also evaluated and the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia was extended twice, by resolutions 1712 (2006) and 1753 (2007). Through resolution 1760 (2007), adopted on 20 June, the Council requested the Secretary-General to establish, within one month, a three-member panel of experts to conduct a follow-up assessment mission to Liberia and neighbouring States to investigate the implementation of the measures outlined in resolution 1521 (2003).

A possible coup attempt in Burundi at the beginning of the reporting period prompted a presidential press statement on the matter. In October 2006, a United Nations integrated office was established there, following the expiry of the United Nations operation. In June 2007, the Council welcomed talks between the President of Burundi and the leader of the Forces nationales de libération — Palipehutu-FNL — and the agreement reached by the parties.

The mandate of the United Nations Mission in Eritrea/Ethiopia (UNMEE) was extended, with some troop withdrawals. On 17 October 2006 the Council called on Eritrea to withdraw its troops from the Temporary Security Zone and lift restrictions imposed on UNMEE. The Council also called on the parties to show maximum restraint and on Ethiopia to implement fully the Boundary Commission's decision. By resolution 1767 (2007), adopted on 30 July, the Council extended the mandate of UNMEE until 31 January 2008.

During this period, Somalia remained in turmoil. Among the issues on the table were the status of the peace talks, the military build-up and its regional implications and the humanitarian situation. Last February, the Council authorized the African Union to establish a mission in Somalia and urged the Secretary-General to send a team to determine the feasibility of a United Nations peace-keeping operation. The Council stressed the need for a broad and inclusive political process and appealed to the international community to assist the AU with financial and logistical support.

Instability in Chad and its borders with the Central African Republic and the Sudan prompted the mandate for a possible multidimensional force in Chad. The humanitarian situation in the country was also a concern. A visit by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator reported that there was a deteriorating situation in the humanitarian dimension and that there was a pressing need for political solutions. In July 2007, the idea of sending a European force to protect refugees in eastern Chad and the north-eastern Central African Republic was also considered by the Council.

After going through precarious times with respect to political, security and economic conditions in late 2006, most Council members expressed support for the ongoing mandate of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau. There were also concerns about ongoing political and social tensions between the National Assembly and the Government, and the Council urged the parties to resolve their differences through dialogue and strict respect for the constitutional framework. Last July, Council members welcomed the formation of a new Government and a stability pact that it hoped would set the foundation for genuine reconciliation.

On 9 August 2006, the Council held an open debate on peace consolidation in West Africa, urging the Economic Community of West African States and the West African States to curb illicit cross-border activities. It reiterated the importance of solidarity among African leaders for peace and security in the region as well as for addressing cross-border issues.

The Council adopted several presidential statements on the Democratic Republic of Congo: in August 2006, regarding the elections; in September, regarding the clash in Kinshasa; in November, looking forward to the installation of a democratically elected Government; in April 2007, regarding the violence in Kinshasa; and in July, expressing concern at the deteriorating security situation in the east of the country. Through resolution 1756 (2007), the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo until 31 December 2007.

In line with its extensive considerations of issues in Africa, the Council conducted a mission to Africa from 14 to 21 June 2007. The mission visited several African capitals, including Addis Ababa, Abidjan, Accra, Khartoum and Kinshasa, and met with officials from the African Union and the countries visited. Council members emphasized the importance of an exchange of views with the African Union Peace and Security Council, and it was decided that the two bodies should meet yearly. The Council also explored how the United Nations, on a case-by-case basis, could assist the AU, particularly when the AU was acting under a Security Council mandate.

The situation in the Middle East and the Palestinian question continued to be considered on a monthly basis. There were seven open debates on the situation, two of which were at the ministerial level. In November 2006, a draft resolution was introduced by Qatar but not adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member. In December, there was a comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Middle East and the peace process over the past 10 years.

The question of Lebanon was also discussed. On 11 August 2006, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1701 (2006), which, inter alia, renewed and enhanced the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) was followed closely, as were the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004) and the work of the International Independent Investigation Commission and the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. By resolution 1748 (2007), the Council extended the mandate of the Commission, and, by resolution 1757 (2007), the Council established the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. In a presidential statement issued in June 2007 (S/PRST/2007/21), the Council condemned the terrorist attack against UNIFIL peacekeepers.

Iraq remained under the Council's consideration. In August 2006, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), whose goal is to assist Iraq in constitutional development, in reforming the legal and judicial system, in promoting human rights and in responding to humanitarian challenges, was extended by resolution 1700 (2006). The resolution also underlines the importance of cooperation between Iraq and its neighbouring countries, as well as the significance of the International Compact with Iraq. In November 2006, the mandate of the multinational force in Iraq was also extended, by resolution 1723 (2006), and the Council reaffirmed the hope that Iraqi forces would soon be able to assume full responsibility for the peace and security of their country. In March 2007, the Council issued a statement by the President to the press expressing support for the United Nations and its Secretary-General in promoting an inclusive and effective process of national reconciliation. In June 2007, the Council adopted resolution 1762 (2007), terminating the mandate of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission.

From 11 to 16 November 2006, the Council sent a mission to Afghanistan. After debate on the mission report, which described its achievements and the challenges it encountered, the Council unanimously extended the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) until March 2008. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan was also extended, until October 2007. Council members voiced their concern about the security situation, including civilian casualties, and about increased violence and terrorist activities carried out by the Taliban, Al-Qaida and other extremist groups.

With regard to Asia, the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste through resolution 1745 (2007) and supported the electoral process. The results of presidential elections in Timor-Leste were announced in May and August 2007, and the Council called upon the Government to confront the challenges facing the country. It is hoped that the election will have a unifying impact on the people of Timor-Leste and that it will pave the way for peace. The Personal Representative of the Secretary-General in Nepal presented a report on the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed on 21 November 2006 by the Government of Nepal and the Communist Party (Maoist). The report requested United Nations assistance in implementing the agreement. The Council expressed support for a technical assessment team to be sent by the Secretary-General. Pursuant to that, a United Nations Mission was established in Nepal, and the Council reaffirmed its support for the peace process, calling for timely, fair and transparent elections.

The Council had several meetings on the situation in Myanmar during the reporting period. In January 2007, a draft resolution was introduced by the United States of America but not adopted, owing to the negative vote of two permanent members.

In Europe, the Kosovo issue, particularly the future-status process, was among the high priorities on the Council's agenda. The Council regularly considered the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo; discussed proposals for Kosovo's future-status settlement, made by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General; and dispatched its mission. From 25 to 28 April 2007, the mission visited Brussels, Belgrade, Priština and Vienna and held a dialogue on the issue with the European Union, NATO, Belgrade, representatives from Priština and the Special Envoy. However, after much effort on a draft resolution, the Council was not able to reach an agreement, and work on the draft was suspended.

The Council held several consultations on Georgia during the reporting period. The mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia was extended, and the Council called for the parties to comply with the ceasefire and to refrain from violence, as well as to finalize agreements on the non-use of violence and the return of refugees and displaced persons.

Among the thematic issues taken up by the Council during the year were threats to peace and security caused by terrorist acts; non-proliferation, particularly in North Korea and Iran; civilians in armed conflict; women, peace and security; and post-conflict peacebuilding. Attention was also given to the role of regional organizations, including the African Union, as well as to genocide prevention, security sector reform, climate change and security, natural resources and conflict, small arms, and the International Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.

On the issue of international terrorism, in September 2006 the Council was briefed, at a public meeting, by the Chairmen of three subsidiary bodies: the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities; the Counter-Terrorism Committee, established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001); and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors, particularly terrorists. Similar briefings by the Chairmen of those Committees were given in May 2007. In December 2006, the Council adopted a presidential statement on the review of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (S/PRST/2006/56). The Council also adopted several press and presidential statements condemning the terrorist attack in Iran (SC/8957) and the bombing of the Delhi-Lahore "Friendship Express" train in India (SC/8961), in February 2007; two suicide attacks in Algiers (S/PRST/2007/10) and a bomb attack in Baghdad (S/PRST/2007/11), in April 2007; and other terrorist attacks in Yemen (S/PRST/2007/26), in July 2007.

With respect to non-proliferation, the Council adopted resolution 1737 (2006) on 23 December 2006. It imposed sanctions on Iran for non-compliance with the demands set out in resolution 1696 (2006). Resolution 1747 (2007) expanded those sanctions in response to continuing non-compliance by Iran. On 14 October 2006, the Council adopted resolution 1718 (2006), imposing sanctions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Attention was also accorded by the Council to such issues as the protection of civilians and children in armed conflict situations and women, peace and security. In March 2007, the Council agreed on a presidential statement (S/PRST/2007/5) conveying the view that it is essential to promote full and equal participation by women in post-conflict and peacebuilding efforts.

The Security Council's cooperation with the Peacebuilding Commission moved forward. On 31 January 2007, the Council held an open debate on post-conflict peacebuilding, focusing on practical steps that could be taken to improve peacebuilding across the work of the United Nations and on the importance of partnerships between the principal organs and those contributing to peacebuilding. Linkages between the Peacebuilding Commission and the principal organs of the United Nations were sought.

On 8 January 2007, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon participated in a formal debate of the Council on threats to international peace and security. The meeting emphasized that the current global challenges and threats demanded a resolute and coherent response based on the collective security system of the Charter of the United Nations. The Council requested regular reporting on regions of potential armed conflict as well as a greater focus on peacekeeping in attaining the set objectives of missions, and stressed the importance of peacebuilding.

The Council also examined the importance of regional organizations to international peace and security. On 20 September 2006, there was a ministerial open debate on the topic. A presidential statement called on regional and subregional organizations to engage in closer cooperation and to promote conflict prevention, peacebuilding and peacekeeping. In a separate session on 28 March 2007, the Council convened an open debate on similar themes, focusing on Africa. As reflected by a presidential statement agreed upon at the meeting (S/PRST/2007/7), the Council recognized the important role of regional organizations in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. The Security Council's relationship with the African Union Peace and Security Council was taken forward during the Council's mission to Addis Ababa in June 2007, during which a joint statement was agreed between the two Councils, committing the two bodies to closer cooperation across the conflict spectrum.

The Council held an open debate on security sector reform on 20 February 2007 to discuss possible United Nations approaches aimed at fostering the creation of effective, accountable and sustainable security institutions that operate within the fabric of the rule of law and respect for human rights. In its presidential statement (S/PRST/2007/3), the Council stressed that reforming the security sector was critical in post-conflict environments to consolidating peace and stability, reducing poverty, establishing the rule of law and good governance, extending legitimate State authority and preventing countries from relapsing into conflict.

On 25 June 2007, the Council held an open debate on natural resources and conflict. In the presidential statement that was adopted after the debate (S/PRST/2007/22), the Council recognized the role that natural resources can play in armed conflict and post-conflict situations by contributing to the outbreak, escalation or continuation of armed conflict. Furthermore, the Council stressed the crucial role that natural resources can play in contributing to long-term economic growth and sustainable development.

On 28 August 2007, the Council held an open debate on the role of the Security Council in the maintenance of peace and security in Africa. In the presidential statement that was adopted after the debate (S/PRST/2007/31), the Council noted the need to provide coherence and enhanced coordination, both in terms of policy and operationalization, among all stakeholders involved in conflict prevention, highlighting the determination of the Council to strengthen its role in preventing and resolving conflicts. The Council also welcomed the intention of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa to hold a seminar expected to contribute to the elaboration of an effective global conflict-prevention strategy.

As a final point, the Council recognized the importance of effective working methods. The presidential note (S/2006/507) remained a practical reference in the work of the Council during the period of coverage, especially in its efforts to enhance effectiveness and transparency. The participation of non-Council members had been accommodated in various open debates throughout the year. Council members also continued to pay attention to the issue of Security Council mandate review within the relevant ad hoc committee.

On behalf of all Council members, I extend my thanks to Members of the General Assembly for the opportunity to present to Members the activities of the Council over the past year. I would also like to express my appreciation, on behalf of the Council, for the work of the Secretary-General and Secretariat staff for their invaluable support of the Council's activities and for their professionalism in the discharge of their responsibilities so that the Council can undertake its important work.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): Thank you very much, Mr. President, for organizing this debate. I also thank the current President of the Security Council for introducing the Council's report (A/62/2) this morning.

The annual report of the Security Council, in its very first sentence, indicates an increase in the workload of the Council, which confirms the trend of recent years. The Council is thus playing the central role foreseen for it under the Charter. At the same time, of course, the permanent pressure under which the Council operates may at times be to the detriment of the depth and quality of its discussions and the decision-making process. Under these circumstances, the Council must be particularly cautious in taking on new issues, especially issues that do not relate to clear and direct threats to international peace and security.

The ever-increasing workload also poses particular challenges in the area of working methods, in particular the question of whether adjustments to the way the Council goes about its business can create more space and time for the necessary deliberations. While it is up to the members of the Council to make those adjustments, inter alia, by taking up ideas brought to their attention from the outside, they are certainly in the direct interest of the membership as a whole, on whose behalf the Council carries out its work. We must not lose sight of the goal, agreed upon in the World Summit Outcome Document, of making the Council more efficient and transparent, further enhancing its effectiveness and the legitimacy and implementation of its decisions. The more overwhelming the internal deliberations are for Council members, the smaller the likelihood of regular and substantive interaction with the rest of Member States. Efficiency and transparency can thus very easily be combined and are, in some respects, even complementary.

Like others, we were very interested in the measures in the area of working methods that the Council adopted in July 2006. They are contained in document S/2006/507, as the Permanent Representative of Indonesia just mentioned. The extent to which — and the regularity with which — these measures are applied are, however, unclear to us. It would appear that their application depends for the most part on the respective presidency of the month and that it does not therefore do enough to create a more lasting relationship between the Council and the rest of the Member States.

This debate usually gives rise to complaints about the nature of the report of the Council, the most popular criticism being the lack of analysis in the annual report. Repeating this same criticism each and every time the annual report is discussed holds little appeal for us. It is of course, to some extent, also understandable why it would be difficult for the Council to produce the report in a manner that is significantly different from what can at this time be called its traditional format.

The discussions about format, however, hide a larger point. On the one hand, the work of the Council takes up much of our attention in private discussions and makes for a very large portion of the coverage in the media. But at the same time, there is never an open and perhaps even interactive discussion on the performance of the Council among the larger membership. Again, the agreement arrived at by the World Summit to enhance the accountability of the Council to Member States and to increase the transparency of its work has not been put into practice. On balance, it seems to us that the Council has been busier than ever over the past 12 months and perhaps also more inaccessible than ever.

As a member of the "S-5" group, the working methods of the Council are of ever-increasing importance to us. We must distinguish between practical measures such as the format of meetings, speaking time, announcement of meetings and so on, and measures that open up the substantive work of the Council to the rest of the Member States. While measures of the first kind are very important, it is of course the latter ones that make a real difference in shaping the Council's relationship with the rest of the membership. In particular, when it comes to its thematic work and to the work of its subsidiary organs, the Council can and should significantly benefit from the input of States that are not at a given time serving on the Council but play an important role in the process of implementing its decisions.

It is therefore essential that adjustments and changes are made to the working methods on an ongoing basis. The Council itself indeed must make those changes, but substantive input and inspiration must also come from outside, and this is where the Assembly must play an important role. Such changes are a reflection of the changing nature of the work of the Council. They are thus unrelated to a possible enlargement of the Council. While they make up an important part of the comprehensive reform of the Council that has been elusive for such a long time, the improvements on working methods must proceed independently from progress on enlargement and, hopefully, contribute to creating momentum on enlargement as well.

The past year has brought quite a few developments in the area of enlargement. Two reports were produced under the leadership of your predecessor, Mr. President, that tried to show a possible new path to achieving enlargement of the Council. The intermediary approach, as it is usually called, is to our mind a compromise between the well-known positions reflected in texts that were presented before the 2005 World Summit. It should, however, not be understood as a less-than-ideal solution that we would set about to change or further refine as soon as it was adopted. Rather, such an intermediary approach should only be considered if it finds the largest possible political support, which has been elusive for all the other proposed solutions presented in the past.

Changing the composition of the Council in the framework of a mandatory review, which we all expect will take place under any proposed solution, will not necessarily prove to be less difficult than the enlargement efforts we have been engaged in for some 15 years now. We therefore need a sustainable political solution and clear indications thereon from all the major stakeholders. If and when those conditions are met, we will be ready, as the membership as a whole, to engage in the negotiating process that most States are now calling for. We wish to express our full support to you, Mr. President, in your difficult task of steering these discussions and encourage you to play a creative and active role in this process.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation wishes to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting, and to thank the President of the Security Council, the representative of Indonesia, for his presentation of the report (A/62/2) today.

The delegation of Mexico wishes to indicate that although it recognizes the efforts made to facilitate consultations on the content of the Security Council report, that document does not, unfortunately, include substantive information on its actions on the various items under examination during the period from August 2006 to July 2007.

We believe that the presentation of the report must not be a mere step, but the means by which the Council collaborates with the General Assembly, in which all Member State are represented, and that the Council should report in a detailed manner on the fulfilment of its responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security. Mexico insists once again that the capacities of the Council and of the Assembly with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security are concurrent, as clearly stated by the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the occupied Palestinian territory, transmitted to the Assembly by document A/ES-10/273 of 13 July 2004.

While the report includes a section on the recommendation for the appointment of the Secretary-General, it does not in any way include details on the changes in the election dynamic that took place in 2006. Given that the Security Council held meetings with different candidates before adopting a final decision, my delegation would have expected some indication in the report of the Council's opinion on that recent experience and its relevance to such occasions in the future.

It is also interesting to note that in the report's index, there is a section on matters that were brought to the attention of the Security Council but not examined in Council meetings during this period. In that respect, it would be desirable to know the reasons for which the Council did not consider those items that Member States or other entities brought to its attention. That would certainly increase transparency in the Council's activities and enhance Member States' confidence in bringing issues of specific interest to them to the attention of the Council.

The report of the Security Council continues to present the same deficiencies observed by almost every delegation for a number of years now. That is why we continue to ask ourselves if the General Assembly truly needs a report consisting of a compilation of Council data and documents published during the previous period.

Certainly, that issue leads us to the issue of the working methods of the Council, which has also not been solved owing to the polarized positions on the matter. A few Member States consider the Security Council not to be accountable to the General Assembly; hence the nature of the report presented to us. But for the vast majority of Member States, that position is not acceptable. We therefore wish for better working methods for the Council in order to achieve, among other things, an analytical report that will contribute to evaluating the actions of the Council. If delegations here in the Assembly consider these reports to be of little use, how much more should the members of the Council ask themselves what interest such documents serve, beyond the confines of this Organization?

It is not a coincidence that every year, on the occasion of the presentation of the report, we also debate the issue of Security Council reform. The presidency of the General Assembly, at its sixty-first session, undertook a remarkable effort to achieve progress in that area. Thanks to that initiative, we were presented with a new approach, the so-called transitional or intermediary approach, oriented towards finding a compromise solution. The debate over the extent and limitations of that approach has already taken place and was very intense, benefiting from much participation. My delegation's position was presented in the statement we made on 19 July 2007.

Several delegations clearly supported the approach, in a spirit of realistic compromise, which opened the possibility of ending the stalemate on the matter, 14 years after the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. That was precisely what all of the facilitators involved in the process called for. However, there were also voices, and we should acknowledge them, that rejected such an approach. In the final balance, the elements of consensus that remain are few but substantive: the status quo is unacceptable and many members, including Mexico, are willing to negotiate.

However, the delegation of Mexico considers that, in any case, intergovernmental negotiations aimed at reaching the widest possible agreement for Security Council reform should occur in a transparent and open way, within the Open-ended Working Group which already exists for that purpose, and should be based on the proposals by the facilitators from the presidency of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly.

In that context, we believe that the appointment of new facilitators or the establishment of any other kind of mechanism would not contribute to the intergovernmental negotiating process that we intend to start as soon as the Working Group's work resumes.

In that respect, we wish to indicate that Mexico considers it essential that, in a spirit of collaboration among all Member States, we avoid searching for or proposing unexpected options with urgent deadlines on the margins of the existing process, in order to continue the negotiations on this issue of particular interest to the international community.

We must be fully aware that, in order to launch an intergovernmental negotiation, there should be agreement on at least three basic principles: first, the inclusion of all known options; secondly, the exclusion of any element that aims at prejudging the final result of the process; and thirdly, the reaffirmation of the requisite consensus or the widest possible agreement, that is, clearly above two-thirds of Member States. Those basic principles must be carefully observed, since, otherwise, we risk creating a dangerous division in this Organization.

That is why Mexico has insisted on a gradual and cautious reform. The enlargement of the Security

Council is, in our view, viable in the short term if it is founded on the following criteria.

First, the expansion should only include the category of new non-permanent members, whose precise number and duration of mandate would be determined within the framework of the negotiations, in order to achieve a new configuration that is representative of the contemporary world.

Secondly, the introduction of the re-election principle for all non-permanent members would guarantee a more frequent and continuous presence of those States with a greater readiness to play an active role on the most relevant items of the agenda, starting with the maintenance of international peace and security.

Thirdly, accountability with regard to the performance of every non-permanent member that aspires to re-election would be guaranteed in a process with the characteristics we have outlined.

Fourthly and finally, the regulation of the use of the veto and the review of the Council's working methods should be, in our view, a counterpart to the actions that the five permanent members of the Security Council should be willing to undertake in the context of such a reform.

The process of United Nations reform is under way. However, if we do not have concrete results on the Security Council, reform will remain incomplete. Mexico is convinced that the will of States is the key to this decisive moment in this new stage of Security Council reform.

My delegation wishes to renew its full commitment to participating in the consultations that the presidency deems necessary, and to collaborate, in a constructive and active spirit, in the elaboration of a process of negotiation that will be acceptable for all Member States and will allow us to make progress on this fundamental issue on our agenda.

Mr. Hoang Chi Trung (Viet Nam): First of all, my delegation would like to thank His Excellency Ambassador R.M. Marty M. Natalegawa, President of the Security Council for November, for his informative presentation on the work of the Council over the 12 months of the reporting period. We also highly appreciate the efforts to move forward the Council's reform process by the President of the Assembly at its sixty-first session, Her Excellency Ms. Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, and her facilitators in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council.

Allow me to avail myself of this opportunity to thank all Member States for the valued support given to my country during the elections of non-permanent Council members held on 16 October 2007 (A/62/PV.26). Viet Nam, elected to serve on the Council for the next two years, is fully committed to making proactive and positive contributions to the work of the Council in the maintenance of international peace and security.

My delegation welcomes the continuing discussion of the Council's work as a way to enhance dialogue and cooperation between the Council and the General Assembly as well as other organs of the United Nations system. Aware that the Council held 184 open meetings, out of 224 formal meetings, during the reporting period, we are pleased to underscore the attempts by Council members to enhance transparency and accountability in the Council's work and their efforts to provide greater opportunities for all Member States to better understand the work of the Council and to engage with the issues of common interest and concerns on the Council's agenda. It is our hope that more concerted efforts will be made to that effect.

The statistics provided in the Council's report show a growing trend in its activities, both in scope and dimension. They also remind us that conflict and tensions are still prevalent in many regions around the world, a fact that requires the international community to show further determination and provide more resources to bring those conflicts to satisfactory resolutions. We are particularly concerned with the cycle of escalating violence and the elusive peace process in the Middle East and the fragile peace processes in some African countries, while non-traditional threats such as terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction continue to pose serious threats to international peace and security.

In that context, we welcome the intensive efforts made by the Council and the Secretary-General in his good offices capacity to promote a peaceful solution to the crisis in Darfur and to foster stability and peacebuilding in Burundi, Somalia, Afghanistan and

Iraq. In addition, the recent encouraging developments on the Korean peninsula, in particular the inter-Korean summit meetings and the positive outcomes of the Six-Party Talks on the nuclear issue, are significant and welcome steps that promise to consolidate stability and peace on the Korean peninsula and beyond.

Much, however, remains to be done by the Council to advance the major objectives of conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding in the world. In the face of various emerging challenges, the Council must revitalize itself to discharge its duties in a more adequate and effective manner. It goes without saying that the Council needs to be reformed in a substantial and timely manner.

Turning to the question of reforming the Security Council, my delegation wishes to reiterate that such reform is crucial to the United Nations reform process. Making the Council more representative and its work more democratic, effective and transparent, especially with regard to decision-making, is vital for adapting the United Nations to the realities of the current world. A modern Security Council should be enlarged in both permanent and non-permanent categories, where developing countries in particular will have more representatives to voice their views and concerns in the maintenance of international peace and security.

On the other hand, the use of the veto should be limited and the Council's working methods substantially improved, in order to make the Council more accessible and transparent to all Member States. Pending any decisions to be adopted on the reform of its membership, the Council should further improve its own working procedures and expand its interaction with other United Nations organs. Public meetings, briefings and press conferences should continue to be expanded in order to provide a timely and greater source of information on the activities of the Council to all Member States.

In that regard, we commend the efforts of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council in carrying out intensive consultations over the past year which have, in our view, generated concrete ideas and proposals to move the reform process of the Security Council forward. Accordingly, we welcome its report and support the decision to continue considering the topic at the present session of the General Assembly so that further concrete results may be achieved, including through intergovernmental negotiations.

We share the view that the reform process of the Security Council now stands at a defining stage where all Member States should utilize the momentum initiated by the recent efforts to move ahead. It is high time that we commit ourselves to genuine negotiations. My delegation is willing to participate in discussions and consultations with other Members in an open, inclusive and constructive manner on the issues at hand. It is our conviction that under your excellent leadership and wise guidance, Mr. President, the reform process will move much further ahead and we will arrive at a fruitful outcome that garners the support of the widest majority of the membership of the United Nations.

Mr. Almansoor (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on the wise manner in which you have been conducting our open discussions. I wish to thank His Excellency the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, Ambassador Marty Natalegawa, the President of the Security Council this month, for having introduced the annual report of the Security Council (A/62/2), pursuant to Article 15 of the United Nations Charter.

Bahrain likewise welcomes the joint debate on agenda item 9 on the report of the Security Council and on agenda item 122 on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. Those two items are interconnected and are the subject of special attention on the part of Member States.

The annual report of the Security Council comprehensively covers the work of the Council, the number of meetings it holds, and questions it has discussed at its previous session. However, we feel that the report would be more useful if it contained a more analytical evaluation of the work done by the Council during the reporting period. It could also have been a general reference tool for Member States. In view of the importance of the item on the agenda of the Assembly, Member States should have enough time at their disposal to consider the report in an in-depth manner in order to be able to examine it carefully and thoroughly, and in order to have a real and transparent idea of the discussions of the Council that are of greatest interest to the entire international community.

The Security Council should take full account of the provisions of the Charter and of General Assembly resolutions relating to the mandates of United Nations organs. Article 24 of the Charter entrusts the Council with the responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. However, that Article does not authorize the Council to take up matters that fall within the competence and prerogatives of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. That impingement on the mandates of other United Nations organs is a clear violation of their powers and could complicate and even cause confusion in the implementation of the Charter. This prompts us to reaffirm the importance of cooperation and coordination among the main United Nations bodies, which is a sine qua non for meeting the various serious challenges that we all encounter.

We would not be wrong to encourage here the presidents of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council to meet periodically to discuss their respective agendas. That could only reinforce coordination among them so as to avoid any interference by a given body in the functions and mandates of the other bodies.

Clearly the question of equitable representation on the Security Council and an increase in its membership is extremely important to Member States. That item was included on the Assembly's agenda for the first time at its thirty-fourth session, in 1979. At the time, the discussion led to the Assembly's adoption of resolution 48/26 on 3 December 1993, which established the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Related Matters to the Security Council.

Since 1994, the Working Group has been working to reach agreement on various aspects of that question. However, efforts to date have been inconclusive. While it is true that when the leaders of the world adopted the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit, they renewed their faith in the United Nations and once again expressed their commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter, they also reaffirmed their commitment to support an accelerated reform of the Security Council to make it more representative, efficient, effective and transparent and to increase the implementation of its resolutions. That should encourage Member States to show more openness in their attitude in order to achieve the progress hoped for in that area.

We wish to reiterate here that the Security Council reform process must be multidimensional. We need to reach agreement on a number of principles.

First, there should be an increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent members pursuant to the principle of equitable geographic representation, so as to enable developing countries and least developed countries to be represented in the Council on an equal basis with the developed countries. The current imbalance needs to be remedied; it does not serve the interest of all Member States. Furthermore, a permanent seat should be given to the Arab States to be occupied on an alternating basis and in coordination with the League of Arab States.

Secondly, constraints should be imposed on the use of the veto power; it should only be used on a restricted basis pursuant to Chapter VII of the Charter. Limits must be imposed that would invalidate the veto when there is a positive vote by a majority of member States of the Security Council and by a two-thirds majority vote of the membership of the General Assembly. Thirdly, sanctions should not be imposed until all peaceful means to resolve conflicts have been exhausted, as stipulated in Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter. Recourse to Chapter VII should be a last resort after all other peaceful methods of resolution have been exhausted and after in-depth discussions of short- and long-term ways not to impose sanctions have been carried out. In any event, sanctions should not be imposed as a means to punish civilians or used as an act of vengeance against them. The purpose of sanctions must be clearly defined and a specific timeline for their application established.

Fourthly, the working methods and procedures of the Council must be reformed. The principles of transparency and openness should be taken into account in the work of the Council to foster a greater participation on the part of non-members of the Council, in particular countries directly concerned by matters discussed in the Council, in keeping with Article 31 of the Charter.

Furthermore, the number of closed or informal consultations should be limited and the number of open and inclusive debates increased, in order to enhance transparency in the Council's work while not limiting participation by United Nations Member States in open debates.

The Security Council should organize comprehensive informational briefings to keep Member States abreast of its activities. While it is true that the Charter has given the Council the task of maintaining international peace and security and has asked it to act on behalf of Member States, the Council's agenda should still be an objective and non-selective reflection of the needs and interests of all Member States. Expansion of the Council should guarantee a greater representation of developing countries and of small countries and the decision-making process should be truly democratic.

It is high time for the Council to acquire official rules of procedure, since its existing rules of procedure are still provisional and are more than 50 years old. That issue has repeatedly hampered the work of the Council and has impelled it to take inappropriate steps during these times, which are beset by challenges and crises. The lack of a finalized set of procedural rules is a serious shortcoming and should not be disregarded. Agreeing on such rules should be one of the Council's top priorities.

In conclusion, we hope that a consensual formula can be agreed upon in order to narrow differences of views. A common denominator needs to be found that is applicable and acceptable to all, guaranteeing a meaningful reform of the Security Council so that all Member States — small and large — can be represented there and so that everyone can feel that the Security Council is really acting on their behalf. This would be in keeping with the Charter and reflect and safeguard the interests and rights of all Member States, protecting them against disasters, crises and wars and guaranteeing respect for their independence.

Mr. Baum (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Security Council for its annual report (A/62/2) and for its introduction to the General Assembly. Like many other delegations, Switzerland last year expressed regret that the report was not sufficiently analytical, which limited its value-added for Member States as a whole. This year we note that the report, as usual, contains a comprehensive overview of the Council's meetings, activities and decisions.

We also note some improvements. The information is placed within a more analytical context. However, we continue to believe that the document could better reflect the challenges confronting the Council as well as the assessments and analyses carried out during the reporting period. The Council's decisions on sanctions or peacekeeping put an ever-increasing burden on Member States. That clearly requires more accountability. Only if the Council is better able to explain itself will national parliaments continue to pick up the check for the Council's decisions.

We are obviously aware of the difficulties involved in producing a report which goes beyond mere enumeration of the Council's activities and meetings. Nonetheless, we encourage the Council to keep striving for a report that responds to the needs of Member States. That also applies to the subsidiary bodies of the Council whose work is hardly reflected in the report.

Reform of the United Nations and therefore reform of the Security Council continues to be of very great importance. The initiatives taken by the former President of the General Assembly and the reports of the two groups of facilitators that followed express the need for progress on Security Council reform.

Switzerland is convinced that Member States should build upon the momentum created in the informal consultations in the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council Reform. We consider that the two reports submitted by the facilitators are a valuable basis for discussion.

The time has come to give the issue of enlargement of the Security Council new impetus. The debate of 19 July in the Open-ended Working Group confirmed that none of the models presented so far will succeed in gaining the support needed to bring about Security Council reform. An intermediary approach, as outlined by the facilitators, could reconcile the various positions on enlargement, provided that Member States show the flexibility that many of us are calling for.

Switzerland welcomes the call contained in the latest report of the Open-ended Working Group to start intergovernmental negotiations during the current session of the General Assembly. For that to happen, we believe that the report of the facilitators should be transformed into a document that can serve as a basis for negotiation. That could be done by mandating one or more of the facilitators in New York or by appointing a special envoy who would conduct consultations at the highest level in national capitals, as suggested by the Foreign Minister of Belgium at this year's general debate.

Whatever option is chosen by you, Sir, we encourage you to launch a process that results in the submission of a document for negotiation.

On 18 October 2007, *Security Council Report* issued a special paper on the Council's working methods, containing an impressive compilation of efforts undertaken since 1993 to reform the Council's working methods. It thus attests well to the importance that Member States continue to give to the issue. Switzerland acknowledges that progress has been made, but we remain convinced that more can and should be done. We believe that further improvement of the working methods of the Council would not only make it more transparent and increase the involvement of Member States in the work of the Council, but would also serve the interests of the Council itself by conferring greater legitimacy on its decisions.

The concrete proposals of the "S-5" group — Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland — are well known. Therefore, I will just recall one — the development of equitable and clear procedures in the current sanctions regimes, in particular with regard to listing and delisting. In that context, we consider that the recommendations submitted at the end of 2006 by the Informal Working Group of the Security Council on General Issues of Sanctions, provide an excellent basis for strengthening existing sanctions regimes. Switzerland would therefore welcome the renewed efforts of that working group in order to ensure the follow-up of that important work.

We are well aware of the fact that the work of the Council has considerably increased over the past 15 years. An improvement of its working methods should therefore go hand in hand with efforts made to enhance its efficiency. We also believe that the Security Council Affairs Division should be provided with enough resources to give to the Council and its subsidiary organs the assistance they expect.

Progress on improving the working methods will not eliminate the need to enlarge the Security Council. Member States must address the need confronting the Council that it better reflect today's geopolitical realities and the need for an enhanced representation of developing countries. In other words, enlargement and improvement of the working methods should ideally go hand in hand, which means that the difficulties caused by expansion should not hamper the improvement of the working methods that a large number of Member States want to see.

Reform of the working methods is a dynamic ongoing process that will become more urgent and more crucial if we are not able to progress on the issue of enlargement.

Reform of the Security Council remains a pressing issue on the United Nations reform agenda. Switzerland is convinced that it is not an impossible mission, but declarations of intent are no longer sufficient. Member States should let action follow words. Greater flexibility on all sides is required if we want to overcome the current impasse. Working towards intergovernmental negotiations could pave the way forward. Switzerland remains committed to reform of the Security Council and will constructively contribute to such a process.

Mr. Al-Jabri (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): Since this is the first time I have taken the floor to speak on behalf of Saudi Arabia, I am pleased to convey to you, Sir, sincere congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly. We are sure that you will conduct our work successfully.

I also wish to express our thanks and appreciation to your predecessor, Her Excellency Ms. Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, which she conducted so ably. We thank her, in particular for her efforts to discuss the question of equitable representation on the Security Council, which is a subject of crucial importance, in order to enable the international community to adapt the Council to changes of the twenty-first century and to enhance its role in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security, especially within the context of the new circumstances, dangers and challenges that are occurring worldwide. We would also like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his tireless efforts working with the General Assembly and the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia supports the principle of the expansion of the Security Council in the categories of both permanent and non-permanent seats, to provide for a democratic and equitable geographical representation in the Council. We believe that Member States have a professional and moral responsibility to show the sincere political will to implement the 2005 World Summit Outcome, adopted by Heads of State and Government, without discrimination and disregarding narrow national interests.

Specific progress towards reform of the United Nations to adapt it to the threats and challenges of our contemporary world has been made. However, reform of the Security Council through its expansion in both membership categories has only seen little progress, except for the nomination of two facilitators, the holding of meetings and informal consultations, the adoption of reports without any specific results. All of this reflects a sincere desire to reform that important principal organ which is the beating heart of the Organization as well as the organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reaffirms the need to intensify its efforts as a whole to reform the structure of the Security Council in order to make it more representative, more effective and more transparent and to enhance its effectiveness and increase the legitimacy of its decisions for the maintenance of international peace and security. The point is to turn it into a body that is capable of dealing with crises before they happen, not just after the event has occurred, so that mankind can be spared the crises it is facing.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia also expresses the hope that the veto will be used to help the weak and to help them assert their rights, not to substitute for justice and encourage the path of tyranny and despotism.

The unjustified manner in which the veto is currently being used is a challenge for all of us and calls for our attention. The misuse of the veto has resulted in the continuation of the chronic problem of the Middle East, which has lasted for more than 60 years. Resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly have been adopted but not implemented because of this unjustified use of the veto, which has prevented the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Finally, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has participated in all consultations at various levels both within and outside the United Nations. We have stated our positions and have listened to the statements of other Member States, which have contained many positive and constructive ideas. But those statements will remain merely theoretical unless they are put into practice. This leads us to the conviction that the members of the Security Council — particularly the permanent membership — must play an important role in addressing this issue in a rational manner, because the Council cannot ignore the changes that have occurred in the world since the establishment of the Organization. Those changes require that all of us agree to make radical changes in the Security Council in accordance with a geopolitical formula.

Mr. Malmierca Díaz (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Ambassador Marty M. Natalegawa, Permanent Representative of Indonesia, for the presentation of the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/62/2), which covers the period from 16 August 2006 to 31 July 2007. I take this opportunity to highlight the excellent work that Indonesia is doing as a Council member.

The report of the Security Council was issued as an official document just a few days ago. The fact that the report was presented so late prevents the General Assembly from being able to consider it in depth. We hope that such a situation does not recur in the future. This is a very important item on the Assembly's agenda, and all of us, as Member States, need a reasonable period of time to prepare to participate in this debate.

This year, the format and approach of the report are very similar to those of previous years. Clearly, much more needs to be done regarding the report's contents.

In carrying out its duties, the Council acts on behalf of all Member States. In that connection, Cuba stresses the Council's responsibility to be accountable to the General Assembly, in accordance with the Charter.

Cuba calls once again on the Security Council to submit a more comprehensive and analytical annual report to the General Assembly. The report should assess the work of the Council, including the cases in which the Council has failed to act as well as the views expressed by its members during the consideration of the items on its agenda.

We also reiterate our appeal to the Security Council, in keeping with paragraph 1 of Article 15 and paragraph 3 of Article 24 of the Charter, to submit special reports to the Assembly for its consideration. Furthermore, the Presidents of the Security Council must ensure that their monthly assessments are comprehensive and analytical and that they are issued in a timely manner.

Mindful of the need to maintain the balance among the functions and powers of the principal United Nations organs, Cuba opposes the tendency to seek to equate reform of the Organization with the granting of greater power to the Security Council. Once again, we emphasize the need to fully respect the functions and powers of the principal organs, in particular of the General Assembly, and to maintain the balance among them pursuant to the Charter, as well as the need for Member States to put an end to any attempt to transfer items on the Assembly's agenda to that of the Council.

The Security Council must abide strictly by the provisions of the Charter and by all resolutions of the General Assembly, as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations.

We call attention to the danger of interference by the Security Council in matters that clearly fall under the functions and powers of other principal United Nations organs and their subsidiary bodies. Close cooperation and coordination among all principal organs is essential if the United Nations is to be able to remain relevant and face existing, new and future dangers and challenges.

Cuba remains particularly concerned about the Security Council's establishment of norms and definitions that go beyond its areas of competence. We reiterate that, under Article 13 of the Charter, the General Assembly has primary responsibility for the progressive development of international law and its codification. We also stress that the Security Council's decision to initiate formal or informal debates on the situation in any Member State or any matter that does not constitute a threat to international peace and security is contrary to Article 24 of the Charter.

In that context, Cuba urges the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council to hold regular debates and to coordinate among themselves regarding the agendas and work programmes of those principal organs. That will ensure increasing coherence and complementarity among them so that they are mutually reinforcing and respect one another's mandates.

We urge the Security Council to take fully into account the General Assembly's recommendations in the area of international peace and security, in accordance with paragraph 2 of Article 11 of the Charter. We are opposed to any attempt to transfer items from the agenda of the Assembly or of the Economic and Social Council to that of the Security Council, and to encroachment by the Council on the functions and powers of the Assembly.

We need to make progress on Security Council reform as an integral part of the current process of United Nations reform. It is unacceptable to maintain the status quo. Cuba supports the General Assembly's decision to continue its consideration of the issue of Council reform at its sixty-second session so as to achieve concrete results through intergovernmental negotiations.

Expansion of the Council's membership should address its lack of representation of developing countries. At the same time, Council reform must not be limited to the membership issue; it must also address substantive issues related to the Council's agenda, its working methods and its decision-making process.

Transparency, openness and consistency are key principles that the Security Council must observe in all its activities, approaches and procedures. Regrettably, the Council has failed to follow those important principles on many occasions. These cases include, inter alia, its reluctance to hold open debates on a number of very important issues and its restriction of participation in some open debates.

The Council must comply with the provisions of Article 31 of the Charter, which permit any country that is a non-Council member to participate in debates on matters that affect it. Closed meetings and informal consultations must be kept to a minimum and should be the exception, not the rule.

Cuba's position is that the process of Security Council reform, which should be carried out in a comprehensive, transparent and balanced manner, should include the following objectives. We must ensure that the Council's agenda reflects the needs and interests of both developing and developed countries, in an objective, rational, non-selective and non-arbitrary manner. We must ensure that expanding the Council will help to make it a more democratic, representative, responsible and effective organ. We must ensure that the Council's rules of procedure, which have remained provisional for 50 years, are formalized to enhance their transparency. And we must democratize the Council's decision-making process, including by limiting the use of the veto with a view to its eventual elimination. In that context, the concept of voluntary self-restraint is insufficient and cannot be considered an option.

Cuba emphasizes the need to take the following measures. We must increase the number of the Council's public meetings and ensure that they provide real opportunities to take account of the opinions and contributions of the greatest possible number of United Nations Members, particularly non-Council members whose affairs are being considered by the Council.

The Council should allow briefings by the special envoys or representatives of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat to take place in public meetings, apart from exceptional circumstances, and further enhance its relationship with the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries, including through sustained, regular and timely interaction. It should also ensure that its subsidiary organs function in a manner that would provide adequate and timely information on their activities to the general United Nations membership.

I would like to conclude by extending our best wishes for success to the incoming new members of the Security Council: Costa Rica, Croatia, Burkina Faso, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Vietnam. They can always count on Cuba's willingness to engage constructively in consultations and negotiations towards reforming the Council as an effective forum in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Al-Murad (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to extend my thanks and appreciation to the President of the Security Council for the month of November, the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, Mr. Marty Natalegawa, for his presentation of the Council's report to the General Assembly (A/62/2). In the report, the President of the Council affirms that the year has seen a marked increase in the size and scope of the Council's activities. In that regard, we also associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We also congratulate the newly elected non-permanent members of the Council — the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Burkina Faso, Viet Nam, Croatia and Costa Rica — for two-year terms beginning in 2008.

The item currently under discussion by the General Assembly is undoubtedly one of the most important items on its agenda, and last year's intensive deliberations on the subject of expanding the Security Council attest to that. Furthermore, the support of the heads of State and Government for the prompt reform of the Security Council, expressed in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, is a fundamental element of the comprehensive effort to reform the United Nations in order to make the Council more representative, more efficient and more transparent. That will consolidate the Council's effectiveness and the implementation of its resolutions, and is yet further proof of the importance that States Members of the Organization attach to the issue of equitable representation in the Security Council and the means to improve its methods of work.

The discussions of the Working Group over the past five years have highlighted the urgent need to restructure the Security Council's apparatus and to increase the transparency of its procedures and methods of work. However, despite the agreement in principle by Member States on the concept of making necessary changes and reform, the Working Group has not reached agreement on the substance of the changes that should be made, despite the fact that 14 years have already elapsed.

Nevertheless, we cannot overlook the progress made in the discussions of the Working Group with respect to the procedures and the methods of work of the Council. There is almost general agreement on many of the measures and proposals sought, and there are even some procedures and methods of work that the Council itself has already begun to apply.

We cannot but commend that improvement in the procedures and methods of work of the Council, and express appreciation to Council members who were conscientious in periodically informing the rest of the membership on developments in the Security Council's implementation of the concept of transparency. We also commend the initiative of the President of the General

Assembly at its sixty-first session, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, to prompt discussions by the Working Group in August of last year on the comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

The position of the State of Kuwait vis-à-vis the issue of Security Council reform proceeds from the following principles. First, Kuwait strongly supports the activation and reform of all United Nations bodies, including the Security Council, in order to enable them to perform the main task entrusted to them by the Charter of the United Nations — the maintenance of international peace and security.

Second, any change in the composition of the membership of the Security Council must not affect its efficiency and effectiveness in taking decisions to confront international threats and dangers. Any such change must contribute to enhancing the legitimacy and credibility of the Council's decisions.

Third, with regard to reforming and improving the procedures and working methods of the Council and to promoting its relations with other United Nations bodies, such as the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, we support all proposals seeking to make the Council's work more transparent and clear, and to facilitate the flow of information to and from the Member States of the United Nations. Kuwait recognizes the need for full respect for the functions and powers of the principal organs, in particular the General Assembly, and to define the Council's role in discussing issues that threaten international peace and security.

Fourth, we affirm the importance of codifying the measures taken by the Security Council in order to improve its working methods without waiting for a consensus to be reached on the other issues, such as the size and composition of the Council and its decision-making process, especially since the codification of such measures will not necessarily entail any amendment of the Charter. We also note that the time has come for the Council to adopt permanent rules of procedure.

Fifth, Kuwait supports the maintenance of the mechanism to elect non-permanent members of the Council, in accordance with paragraph 2 of Article 23 of the Charter. That will improve opportunities for small States, of which we are one, to become members of the Council and contribute to its work.

Sixth, as to the right of veto, we note the importance of limiting and regulating the scope of its use, inter alia, by restricting its application to issues that fall under Chapter VII of the Charter.

Finally, if an agreement on the increase of non-permanent seats of the Council should be reached, the distribution of those seats among the regional groups must take into consideration the substantive increase in the number of States in the Asian Group.

In conclusion, we hope that an agreement can be reached on a consensual text satisfactory to all sides that can guarantee the performance of the Council of its functions, pursuant to the Charter, without impediment.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt): Allow me at the outset to associate myself with the statement to be delivered by the Ambassador of Angola on behalf of the African Group, and to express my deep appreciation to Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, for her concerted efforts to push forward the issue of equitable representation on and reform of the Security Council, particularly since that important issue constitutes an integral part of the comprehensive reform of the United Nations.

I would also like to commend the five facilitators and the Ambassadors of Chile and Liechtenstein for their extensive efforts and valuable reports, which were crowned by the adoption of the report of the Open-ended Working Group containing its draft decision adopted by consensus. The delegation of Egypt looks forward to continued efforts on your part, Sir, to steer the open-ended working group towards our common aspiration for a successful resumption of deliberations during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly.

There is no doubt that the sixty-first session resulted in increasing momentum in dealing with the enlargement and reform of the Security Council in a manner that raised the expectations of many on the prospect of reaching an agreement on a clear vision that would garner the widest possible support of Member States. However, the positive nature of our deliberations on the aforementioned issue, partly in light of the reports of the facilitators and their stipulation of a set of alternatives, coincided with the arduous attempts by some parties throughout the past session to push the African continent to change its unambiguous position, enshrined in the Ezulwini Consensus and confirmed by subsequent African summits, beginning with the Sert summit, rather than seek a consensus on the substantive issues under consideration.

In the aftermath of the submission of the two reports of the facilitators and the two ambassadors, and the subsequent exhaustive deliberations that took place on them, some voices were raised, emphasizing the need to send a message to the last African summit in Accra, to convince African leaders to amend the African position and to allow a greater degree of flexibility in dealing with some aspects of the Ezulwini Consensus, especially the right of veto. The African leaders, however, decisively rejected those attempts and insisted on upholding the full implementation of the Ezulwini Consensus, with all its elements. The Consensus has represented and will continue to represent the just demands capable of rectifying the historic injustice against Africa caused by the denial of its legitimate right to permanent membership and the subsequent inability of any of its States members of the Security Council to exercise the right of veto, despite the continent's numerical preponderance and the complexity of interests it seeks to defend in the Security Council.

In light of the failure of the attempts of those seeking to amend the common African position at the Accra summit, new alliances began to emerge between parties advancing only their national interests. They viewed draft resolution A/61/L.69 as a means to circumvent the demands stipulated in the Ezulwini Consensus, especially its insistence that the right of veto be extended to the new permanent members as the most important African demand insofar as what it represents with respect to increasing the ability of the African continent to influence the work and resolutions of the Security Council. The African States were once again able to keep their position intact and to reinstate the right of veto in the focus of discussions in the Open-ended Working Group in the next phase, side by side with the other elements enshrined in the Ezulwini Consensus, until Africa gets its equitable right to a just representation that would allow it to influence Security Council dynamics.

The events that unfolded during the discussion of the report of the Open-ended Working Group in the sixty-first session necessitate an evaluation of what has been achieved so far, within a correct and substantive framework, in order to agree on a collective means by which we can achieve our common objectives of enlarging and reforming the Security Council at the earliest possible date, based on the widest possible agreement commensurate with the important nature of that issue. The intermediate arrangements proposed by the report of the five facilitators and the two ambassadors introduced a number of alternatives under each of the five categories for discussion, allowing each party with a vested interest in the process to envision the model that best suits its objective and materializes its aspirations in the enlargement process.

It is time, therefore, to put those different alternatives to the test through all available mechanisms, as well as the diplomatic and political tools and capabilities at our disposal, including intergovernmental negotiations, as stipulated in the decision adopted last year. Since our presence here is not in a personal capacity, but rather as permanent representatives of our Governments, we would like to stress that the mention of intergovernmental negotiations as one of the options for moving the process forward is merely an acknowledgement by the General Assembly of an already existing mechanism. Hence, our agreement or lack of agreement over any issue is to be understood within the framework of such negotiations, carried out in either a principal or a subsidiary organ of the United Nations.

If such intergovernmental negotiations are to begin on that very important issue, they should be based on a clear vision put forward by a State or group of States, and only when that State or group of States has the inherent conviction that the vision it advocates can attain a very wide degree of support, exceeding the required two-thirds majority stipulated by the Charter. Such a proposed vision should be negotiated and evaluated by all members of the General Assembly, but until one or a group of States can come up with such a vision, which we have been actively seeking to formulate for the past 14 years, it is Egypt's view that the President of the General Assembly should lead more consultations — and I repeat consultations and not negotiations — within the framework of the Open-ended Working Group to narrow the difference in positions between the conflicting interests of all stakeholders. Such consultations could be undertaken with the aim of reducing the number of alternatives stipulated under every category of the facilitators' reports with a view to creating a positive environment that could lead to the eventual introduction of a vision that could work as a basis for negotiations based on a proposal or proposals from Member States.

This approach differs fundamentally from that of the draft resolution sent by one of the aspiring nations only to the African countries at the end of last week — and we all know why it was sent only to African countries — in a new attempt to overcome the African position set out in the Ezulwini Consensus. The draft resolution endeavours once again, unfortunately, to terminate the role of the Open-ended Working Group, the most appropriate democratic framework incorporating all Member States, and to replace it by calling upon the President of the General Assembly to initiate intergovernmental negotiations in the same manner that was rejected by Member States in draft resolution A/61/L.69, submitted at the sixty-first session.

Despite our great confidence in the wisdom and integrity of the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session and in his ability to lead us to success, the President's neutrality, transparency and objectivity in dealing with that sensitive issue and the fact that the President does not represent a Government require that we keep his high office away from this intergovernmental negotiating process. We should rather seek to enhance the President's ability to conduct consultations, and not negotiations, within the framework of the Open-ended Working Group and in the same successful manner followed by the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, and even more successfully.

Our agreement on the inclusion of intergovernmental negotiations as one of the alternatives for considering the subject matter in the coming phase should not be interpreted in any way as a renunciation of the African position as defined in the Ezulwini Consensus or as agreeing to limit our ability to address the question through intergovernmental negotiations, distinct from other diplomatic means and capabilities. It is merely derived from the desire to explore all ways and means to guarantee the emergence of new creative options that might acquire the desired wide support. But to achieve that, we should not limit our discussions to interim arrangements, particularly as the report of the facilitators itself opens the way for each State or group of States to maintain their original positions, if they believe that this is the ideal way to achieve the international objectives. Accordingly, positions of all stakeholders, described by the report of the facilitators as "maximalist", will continue to constitute their formal positions, while, at the same time, not affecting their ability to exert extra efforts to reach a compromise that meets the widest possible support.

In this context, I would like to stress once again that Egypt will not abandon the lofty interests of Africa in order to achieve narrow national goals. Our vision for permanent membership is clear. It is based on the conviction that a permanent member without a veto right is merely a non-permanent member in the Security Council for an extended term — or forever. We believe that permanent membership without a veto will not change the balance or structure of power in the Security Council and will not accomplish the objective of protecting and defending African interests in the Council. Our perspective is based on the fact that Africa legitimately deserves to have no less than two permanent seats and two additional non-permanent seats. Furthermore, we do not believe that the veto issue should be considered within reform of the working methods, which should concentrate only on promoting the transparency and accountability of the Security Council when it addresses the interests of Member States.

As Member States, we have to strive to surpass our national interests and have a more realistic vision concerning our regional and international interests. It is time to abandon the narrow coalitions of those who seek to impose particular views so as to achieve their national interests. We should aim for global coalitions to achieve the international goal of creating a more democratic Security Council, a Council that better represents the general membership of the Organization. Consequently, we are looking forward to consultations under the auspices of the President of the General Assembly, in his capacity as the Chair of the Open-ended Working Group, and to any subsequent negotiations, discussions or consultations that might take place between Member States on any new substantive vision — submitted by a State or group of Member States with the aim of achieving the interests of all of us. We look for a collective understanding between the G4, the Uniting for Consensus group, the African Group, and all others who have interests — the small States and islands States, developing and developed countries and States representing different cultures and civilizations. All these represent the elements of diversity that could enhance the representative character of the Council — thus achieving good governance at the international level, side by side with good governance at the national level.

Egypt is confident that we will reach an expansion of the Security Council on solid foundations, built on solidifying the principles of justice and equality in rights and obligations, which would, in turn, allow the Security Council to become a platform for democracy and transparency that would deal with matters involving Member States with due respect and dignity.

While expressing our sincere appreciation to Mr. Natalegawa, the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, for presenting the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly, we note that the report includes only brief references to the cases considered by the Council within the past year. African issues continued to be at the forefront of the Council's agenda. The report mentioned briefly the developments that have taken place in the countries concerned within the year. Moreover, the report continues to follow the same trend of previous years, which we have criticized several times. It includes only an enumeration of the meetings and the documents of the Council. This approach lacks adequate scrutiny and evaluation of the deliberations of the Council, the positions of its members and the motives behind its resolutions and the presidential and press statements issued by the Council.

Furthermore, the Council, despite our continued express concern, continues to interfere in the competence of the General Assembly, a matter which has an impact on the sensitive balance between the main organs of the Organization. Also, the failure of the Security Council to act on some issues relating to the maintenance of peace and security such as genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the cessation of hostilities between belligerent parties constitute further sources of serious concern for us. This was very clearly addressed in the Havana Declaration by the heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, which called for a greater role of the General Assembly in addressing those issues when the Council fails to address them, owing to a lack of unanimity among its permanent membership.

All of this confirms the necessity of expediting the process of reforming the working methods of the Security Council and of rapidly agreeing on the enlargement of its permanent and non-permanent membership. This alone can conclude the process of reforming the United Nations, as we continue to believe that United Nations reform is not complete without the reform and expansion of the Security Council.

Mr. Voto-Bernales (Peru) (*spoke In Spanish*): As reflected in the report today before the General Assembly, the Security Council experienced an increase in the volume and scope of the questions on its agenda between 1 August 2006 and 31 July 2007. This debate allows us to pause and reflect in the same constructive spirit in which Peru has been participating in work of that body for more than 22 months.

A large part of the heavy agenda of the Security Council consists of intrastate conflicts, which, for the most part, take place in States marginalized from progress, with weak institutions and precarious development indicators. In order to prevent these types of conflicts from multiplying and to prevent countries from relapsing into such situations, we continue to believe that the Council should address both the military aspects and those of institutional rebuilding, which it has prioritized, as well as give attention to other structural factors, such as poverty, social exclusion, environmental degradation or transnational crime.

While it is not our purpose to examine these cases in detail, we do need to recognize that the progress made in Liberia, Sierra Leone or in Haiti require substantive action to address structural factors involved, so that these cases can become successful experiences, as we all wish. Activities in this regard will, of course, be consistent with the understanding agreed in the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit (A/RES/60/1) that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

We should also recall that, faced with the danger of more genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, we have the responsibility to protect populations from these scourges. This requires us — the Member States of the United Nations and of the Security Council in particular, to remain vigilant in order to effectively protect these populations, when the State called upon to do so cannot — or will not — fulfil its obligations. The International Criminal Court is likewise a guarantee that those responsible for such atrocities do not remain unpunished. For this reason, we appeal to all countries to accede to the Rome Statute.

At the same time, inter-State conflicts that are still not resolved, such as the question of Palestine or demarcation between Eritrea and Ethiopia, continue to deserve special attention. The indefinite persistence of these and other such situations is highly injurious to the key objectives of the Security Council in that renewed efforts are required to achieve peace in the framework of international law and to fulfil commitments of mutual respect. To this end, it is essential for the parties to have the will to resolve them.

As to elements that still await more effective action from the Security Council, Peru would reiterate its view that the United Nations needs to have available the strategic reserve force which would enable Blue Helmets to be deployed with the necessary urgency. Some of the situations considered in the present report of the Council, for example, could have been handled with great diligence had such a reserve force existed.

Equally acute is the need to strengthen disarmament and non-proliferation regimes of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and related systems. Peru supports the actions of the Security Council aimed at avoiding proliferation among State and non-State actors and at the same time believes that the multilateral system should redouble its efforts with this purpose in mind and make progress on the collective commitments entered into. We need the development of cooperative security to buttress the structures of peace and security and to avoid arms races globally, regionally and subregionally.

Terrorism has grown into a scourge of universal scope that needs to be condemned and combated without concessions. In whatever guise or shape, whatever may be its motivation, terrorism is unacceptable. In this fight, the multilateral system has given itself 13 international conventions, in addition to regional agreements and a global counter-terrorism strategy. In this regard, resolute action on the part of the Security Council is vital to facing this threat. The commitment of every State should be unequivocal. We must cooperate to ensure that States have available the operative capabilities, above all, of intelligence and police capacity, as key parts in this struggle, while at the same time preserving unlimited respect for human rights.

Likewise, there are other factors which require the Council's continued attention since they influence conflicts, such as the action of irregular armed groups, illegal trade in small arms and light weapons, smuggling of natural resources, drug trafficking and other ways in which organized crime weakens institutions, undermines social stability, jeopardizes democracy and threatens security.

At the same time, Peru believes that it essential to recognize, in particular, the role of the environment in the preservation of international security. Climate, water and forests are very distinct elements for which we need to build strategies and specific and differentiated actions if we are to avoid a worsening in the depredation of resources, deforestation, pollution, and sudden changes in climate and radiation, inter alia, that have an impact on the subsistence of certain populations and on the quality of life, present and future, of the whole planet.

On these factors it is not the purview of the Security Council to play a normative role, nor is it within its jurisdiction to negotiate and adopt universal commitments that need to be adopted in other forums and mechanisms. But it is necessary for these factors to be duly considered — in their security dimension — in specific cases on the agenda of the Council.

Likewise, we are convinced that the wide range of threats to peace and security and their interrelationship demand the assistance of other multilateral agencies and regional organizations and the active participation of the private sector and civil society, within their respective responsibilities, in order to tackle them. This approach will make the work of the Security Council more consistently effective and will situate its work in a perspective of cooperation with the multilateral system in the event of a possible conflict.

Before concluding, I would like to make the point that as far as Peru is concerned it is particularly gratifying to coordinate in the Council the work on the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. While part of this work, such as the recent adoption of resolution 1780 (2007), will be reflected in next year's report, I would like to reaffirm our recognition to the delegation of Haiti, the Group of Friends, the States that make up the 2x9 mechanism of troop-contributing countries and the remaining members of the Security Council, together with whom it has been possible to achieve an agreement to continue supporting the process to restore security and rebuild the institutions of this fraternal country of the Caribbean.

Peru, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, discharges its responsibility and complies with the approaches guiding its foreign policy. On the basis of its own economic and social realities, its regional outreach and its profound commitment to multilateralism, Peru will continue from this Assembly and other bodies helping to constructively build international peace and security, respect for international law, and the promotion of economic and social development, as well as the defence and fostering of human rights, democracy and freedoms in the world.

Mr. Argüello (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): We wish to thank you, Sir, first of all, for convening this debate on agenda items 9 and 122. The role of the Security Council in buttressing international peace and security is clearly key. We welcome the report of the Council (A/62/2) and thank the Indonesian presidency for introducing it. Our country was a member of the Council for part of the period covered by the report and we were witnesses and protagonists in the efforts of the Security Council in carrying out its mandate under the Charter.

We are following with concern the most grave incidents affecting international peace and security and, in particular, we would like to draw attention to the situation in Darfur, in Somalia and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We do hope that the upcoming Annapolis conference will make real progress aimed at achieving a just and legitimate solution to the conflict in the Middle East within international law, as established by the various resolutions of the Security Council. We are aware of the gravity of situations that place restrictions on freedoms and that violate human rights in many countries.

As regards the question of the reform of the Security Council, we believe that we always need to keep this issue as a priority on our agenda. Every day that passes without reform makes that body more illegitimate and more anachronistic — illegitimate because it fails to represent a membership of 192 Members, and anachronistic because it manifests an historical reality that goes back 60 years.

We have looked at the proposals of the facilitators of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly in the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council (A/61/47). The ways and means suggested are, in our opinion, the only ones that offer reasonableness and the potential to make progress and to emerge from the impasse that has been in place for some years. They include formulas for intermediate expansion that will not leave everyone satisfied for now, but which present a possible way out, creating a testing ground, getting us out of inertia and the status quo.

The intermediary approach, which might last 10, 15 or 20 years, would make it possible to increase the membership and the participation of all categories of countries and would, in particular, ensure effective access by small States to the Security Council. I wish to mention the importance of both rotation and increasing the regional factor, as much in terms of election methods — including the accountability involved in re-election — as in terms of coordinating positions. We must advance at the regional level, increasing confidence and cooperation without being divided by hegemonies or power politics. An intermediary way also provides an opportunity for the five permanent members to heed the voices of the great majority, which wants to improve the working methods of the Council, controlled today by a small group of countries.

This year, in the Open-ended Working Group, we noted that only a catastrophe such as the Second World War could create a system of privileges such as that held by the permanent five. Today's world, fortunately, does not present a similar justifying scenario at a time when armed conflicts and social conflicts persist and there is a sustainability crisis to a degree previously unknown in history. I believe that the next stage should see us ending our speech-making and unilateral actions. In the Open-ended Working Group we must focus on procedures, formats and modalities that support negotiation. This stage, which may also be called pre-negotiation, should be tackled creatively and with the greatest possible political agreement. That is the pathway to compromise.

Mr. Dapkiunas (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Belarus delegation would like to thank the Security Council for the report on its work (A/62/2). The work of the Council is given priority attention by the delegation of virtually each Member State.

Belarus closely follows the reactions of the Council to threats to international peace and security. In that context, it may be unnecessary for the Council, when preparing its annual report, to enumerate the activities it has undertaken. United Nations Member States expect to receive an analytical — rather than informational — document that contains in-depth analysis of situations in various hot spots of the world and of the international situation as a whole. We understand that the preparation of that kind of outcome document could cause some difficulties because of the need to reach agreement between delegations and member States of the Council. We would suggest as a first stage, therefore, that more attention be given to the analytical component when preparing the monthly reports of delegations presiding over the Council for a given month.

Once again we are discussing the reform of the Security Council. Such reform should make it more representative, more effective and more transparent. The Open-ended Working Group is doing some important, meticulous work to make real progress in defining concrete formulas for expanding the membership of the Council. We support its activities and are prepared to continue to lend the Open-ended Working Group every possible assistance.

Today it is clear that, since the Council was created, as a parallel system for organizing the world, the United Nations itself has changed. Enhancing the effectiveness and the authority of the Security Council should be accomplished in a manner that reflects contemporary geopolitical realities. We are therefore speaking of broader political participation by States in the decision-making of the Council. The reform of the Security Council should take place primarily in important areas such as the expansion of its membership and improving its methods of work. However, we believe that the Council should remain a compact and effective organ that is able to react in a timely and effective manner to threats to international peace and security.

The reform of the Council should not be confined merely to an arithmetical increase in composition. The point of the reform is for the expansion to make the Council more authoritative and more representative. Accordingly, we continue to support the idea of the Council adopting decisions if they are supported by two-thirds of those voting. It would be a correct step politically and logically. Having that kind of a system in place for decision-making in the Security Council would be in keeping with the rules adopted by the General Assembly with regard to the adoption of important decisions concerning the maintenance of international peace and security.

Belarus continues to favour the granting of an additional seat in the category of non-permanent member in a new expanded Council to the Eastern European regional group. We also believe that countries representing the African, Asian and Latin American regions are underrepresented in the Council's current composition. Belarus is in favour of giving them an additional seat in that body in the permanent member category.

The founding fathers of the United Nations placed the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security upon the Security Council. The Council was conceived as an organ that could take decisive steps to prevent and remove threats to international peace and security. It was created, not just to be representative but to be a responsible organ with the capacity to take decisive, appropriate action for the maintenance of international peace and security. Individual cases of the Council's inability to take timely and effective steps on questions relating to the maintenance of international peace and security show that it is precisely the reform of the Council that would allow it to carry out its basic functions more effectively, as the guarantor of peace and security.

Attempts made by some members of the Council to unjustifiably expand the agenda by adding items that do not fall within its competence reduce the effectiveness of its work and often undermine the authority of the Security Council. Accordingly, we think it is important to restore the balance of responsibility between the Security Council and the General Assembly. Belarus believes that the Security Council should improve its working methods. That area of Council reform should be discussed within any reform package. Even if agreement is not reached on other areas of reform of the Council, efforts to improve the working methods of the Council must absolutely be made.

In a new reformed Council, a crucial issue to be considered is the broader involvement of States that are non-members of the Council in its work. In our view, that would enhance the accountability of the Council to all Member States of the United Nations and would make its work more transparent. Member States should have direct access to Council meetings, in particular in cases when their interests are directly affected or where agenda items are discussed that have a direct relationship to those countries.

The ongoing and often emotional debates about expanding the Council have shown that there are advocates and opponents of various plans for Council reform. The presence of those different views among Member States on that issue is something that Belarus sees as a natural phenomenon. It is a normal feature of an on-going negotiating process. In our view it is important to reach the broadest possible unity of views through consultation and dialogue. However, the reform process should not be discontinued because of difficulties and because of a lack of conformity in approach. The reform of the Council will move forward and will work to the extent that Member States show enough political will, are sufficiently aware of their responsibility and have enough energy, resources and attention to advance and carry out that important cause.

Mr. Mansour (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): First of all allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on the way you are conducting the debate. My delegation also wishes to thank the Ambassador of Indonesia, the President of the Security Council for this month, for having submitted the report of the Security Council today (A/62/2) to the General Assembly pursuant to the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter.

My delegation would like to make the following comments on the two items on the agenda of today's plenary meeting, namely, "Report of the Security Council" and "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters".

I need hardly recall that the General Assembly's consideration of the item on the report of the Security Council is the only opportunity for States Members of the United Nations, in particular for those of us that are not members of the Security Council, to consider in depth the activities of that organ and to identify measures that should be taken to make the required improvements to its working methods.

My delegation is pleased to see that, in terms of format, the Security Council's report for this reporting period (A/62/2), contains an analytical introduction in addition to the normal statistics. However, efforts should continue to further improve the quality of the report which clearly remains a compilation of the decisions and resolutions that were adopted and a rather factual description of the Council's work.

We are far from what was recommended by Member States to have an annual analytical report. Accordingly, it should be noted that the General Assembly has asked the Security Council to periodically submit to it special thematic reports on questions of international interest. To date, no report of that kind has been submitted.

Turning to the functioning of the Council, we are pleased to note that during the reporting period the Security Council held a large number of open meetings during which a greater number of States participated. We note also a definite increase in public briefings, which have given non-members of the Council the possibility of being briefed, albeit partially, about developments concerning some of the matters of which the Council is seized. Having said that, we are convinced that much remains to be done to make the functioning of the Council more transparent, which would guarantee access to information to all delegations, in particular, delegations that have items on the Council's agenda.

Likewise, I would like to come back to the question of the proliferation of public meetings on matters that fall more within the mandates of other United Nations organs such as the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. In this regard, it remains useful to strengthen the regular consultation mechanisms between the Presidents of United Nations organs in order to remedy any encroachment or interference.

On questions of substance, the report of the Security Council shows that that organ has acted with determination to address a number of conflicts around the world, and in particular on the African continent. That enhances the Council's authority and role in the maintenance of international peace and security.

But the efforts of the Council fall short of expectations in the Middle East. Frustration at the Council's repeated failure to become more involved in settling the question of Palestine and to shoulder its responsibilities in that area poses a serious threat to the region and to the authority of the Council itself.

With regard to the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council, allow me, Mr. President, first of all, to pay high tribute to your predecessor, the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, Ms. Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, and to her facilitators, including my colleague, the former Permanent Representative of Tunisia, for their outstanding contribution to the item under discussion today.

The conclusions and recommendations that they submitted to Member States last spring allowed the process of consultation to be relaunched, in particular by means of proposing a new approach to unfreeze the status quo and to resolve the dilemma of expanding the Security Council, which has persisted for more than 15 years. My delegation welcomes the agreement reached by Member States in early September, within the framework of the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council (A/61/47), whereby we decided to continue consideration of the question of the reform of the Security Council

> "so that further concrete results may be achieved, including through intergovernmental negotiations, building on the progress achieved so far, ... as well as the positions of and proposals made by Member States". (see *A/61/47, para. 21*)

Looking forward to the implementation of that understanding this year, under your guidance, Mr. President, allow me to make the following point. My country believes that the purpose of any reform of the Security Council is to strengthen equitable representation in that body, bolster its credibility and enhance its effectiveness. The Security Council must reflect the political and economic realities of today's world. It should be given the legitimacy it needs to act on behalf of the international community in carrying out its mandate under the Charter.

These objectives will be unattainable without expansion, in particular for the benefit of developing countries. The size of the restructured Council should reflect all of the sensitivities of the international community. In this context, Tunisia continues to strongly support the position of the African Union as reflected in the African consensus on reform of the Security Council, which to date remains unchanged.

In our view there must be an immediate remedy of the long-standing injustice which has denied Africa a permanent presence in the Security Council. There is hardly any need to recall that this unjust situation has been going on since the establishment of the United Nations. We would support any formula that would give developing countries in general, and Africa in particular, the role due them on the Security Council.

Finally, the question of the periodic review of the Security Council, once it has been expanded and reformed, is an essential factor of the reform programme. This consideration will help to build confidence that will allow us to make the adjustments that might be necessary in the future, but still more important, it represents a mechanism through which we would be able to assess the contribution of the new members to enhancing the effectiveness of the Council.

In conclusion, we believe that, in order to continue to enjoy the trust of Member States and of world public opinion, the Security Council should demonstrate that it is in a position to effectively tackle the most difficult questions, including by becoming more representative of the international community as a whole and of the realities of today's world. It is time to embark on that path in a determined and serious manner.

Organization of work

The President: I should like now to consult Member States regarding an extension for the work of the Sixth Committee. Members will recall that, at its second plenary meeting, on 21 September 2007, the General Assembly approved the recommendation of the General Committee that the Sixth Committee would complete its work by Thursday, 15 November 2007. However, I have been informed by the Chairman of the Sixth Committee that the Committee has not been able to finish its work by Thursday, 15 November, and will need an additional meeting on 19 November 2007, depending on the availability of Conference Services.

May I therefore take it that the General Assembly agrees to extend the work of the Sixth Committee for one additional meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: I wish finally to inform the General Assembly that in addition to the items scheduled for Thursday morning, 15 November 2007, the Assembly will take up the reports of the Fifth Committee contained in documents A/62/528, A/62/529, A/62/530, A/62/531, A/62/532 and A/62/533 on sub-item (a), "Appointment of members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions"; sub-item (b), "Appointment of members of the Committee on Contributions"; sub-item (c), "Confirmation of the appointment of members of the Investments Committee"; sub-item (d), "Appointment of a member of the Board of Auditors"; sub-item (e), "Appointment of members of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal", and sub-item (f), "Appointment of members of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee", of agenda item 114, respectively.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

United Nations

A/62/PV.48

General Assembly
Sixty-second session

Official Records

48th plenary meeting

Wednesday, 12 November 2007, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kerim .... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 9 and 122 (*continued*)

Report of the Security Council (A/62/2)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): I am particularly honoured to address this Assembly on behalf of the African Group regarding a question of particular interest to our continent, which is Security Council reform. Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting, as this matter remains unfinished business.

I would like to commend the Indonesian presidency for the presentation of the report of the Security Council (A/62/2). The African Group also takes note with appreciation of the notification by the Secretary-General under Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations concerning matters relative to the maintenance of international peace and security included on the agenda of the Council (A/62/300).

The Security Council report submitted to us devotes an important place to the African continent, since African issues continue to be, as rightly referred to in the report, at the forefront of the Council's agenda. Despite the prevalence of conflicts, positive developments are occurring in several countries in post-conflict situations, changing the gloomy picture sometimes presented of the continent to the world. We are pleased that the Security Council has regularly kept on its agenda the consideration of post-conflict situations in those countries.

The African Group welcomes in particular the Security Council's adoption of a presidential statement (S/PRST/2007/42) on its relations with regional organizations in matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security. With regard to the African Union (AU), the Security Council's mission to the AU's headquarters at Addis Ababa has enabled a very productive exchange of views on matters of mutual interest. The African Group therefore encourages the two bodies to continue that dialogue in order to increase the likelihood of successful outcomes in the area of peace and security.

While addressing the Security Council last week on behalf of the African Group in the debate devoted to the role of regional and subregional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security (see S/PV.5776), I mentioned that Africa has been the stage for useful experiences in the areas of peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding — and, consequently, for the work of the Security Council. However, Africa is also fully aware of a central issue involving its relationship with the Council: the continent is not adequately represented in the Security Council.

The time has therefore come to redress the historical injustice done to Africa, in order to close a chapter that followed two world wars and to move forward in the search for collective security by

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working together in a more inclusive, transparent and democratic manner. For that reason, and in conformity with the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, Africa is asking for not less than two permanent seats on the Council — with all the prerogatives and privileges of permanent membership, including the right of the veto — in addition to five non-permanent seats. It would be the responsibility of the African Union to select Africa's representatives on the Security Council — a question to be given due consideration in accordance with acceptable criteria to be determined collectively at the level of the African Union and the United Nations, respectively. Africa is in principle opposed to the veto, but, if it is to be maintained, it should be made available to all permanent members of the Security Council as a matter of justice. The Ezulwini Consensus is an integrated package that contains all the elements to which I have referred.

While addressing the General Assembly at the opening of its sixty-second session, Mr. President, you rightly stated that

> "If we want the United Nations to play its full role, we will have to do more and do it more effectively — both operationally at the country level and with regard to management at Headquarters. We also need the courage to move to a new stage leading to concrete results on Security Council reform". (*A/62/PV.1, p. 2*)

We fully endorse that view, and we commend you for your foresight and courage. You can therefore count on the support of the African Group.

The African Group is committed to strengthening the United Nations, including the Security Council, whose thorough reform will enable it to be more legitimate, representative and effective and, consequently, in a better position to perform its primary responsibility as provided for by the Charter of the Organization.

Ms. Lintonen (Finland): First, let me thank His Excellency Ambassador Marty M. Natalegawa, Permanent Representative of Indonesia, for his introduction this morning of the report (A/62/2) of the Security Council to the General Assembly covering the period from 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007.

Finland is a firm supporter of comprehensive Security Council reform. It is imperative that we build upon the work already done during previous sessions of the General Assembly and take the Security Council reform process forward. A process must be put in place that keeps the discussion going and achieves concrete progress soon. We support you, Mr. President, in your efforts to facilitate that process.

Finland views Security Council reform as an essential element of the comprehensive reform of the United Nations. Despite the progress made in many areas of overall United Nations reform, Security Council reform has not advanced. In order to strengthen the credibility and legitimacy of the United Nations system, we need to proceed on that reform as well.

The reform of the Council must aim at increasing both its legitimacy and its effectiveness. The Council should better represent today's world community. The number of both permanent and non-permanent members should be increased, without extending the right of the veto. It is also important to guarantee the possibility of smaller States having an opportunity to serve in the Security Council. As an important part of comprehensive reform of the Security Council, the reform of its working methods and procedures is also vital.

A more representative, and therefore more legitimate, Council will also be more effective in carrying out its functions. It is now important to take the much-needed next step under your able guidance, Mr. President.

Mr. Al-Jarman (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express our deep gratitude to the President of the Security Council for the month of November for his valuable introduction this morning of the annual report of the Council (A/62/2). I would also like to thank the former Chairperson and facilitators of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council for their outstanding efforts in managing the meetings of the Group during the previous session. I wish the Group every success in pursuing its important role in reaching solutions through compromise that will help to strengthen the role and effectiveness of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Over the decades, the Security Council has made substantial efforts to maintain international peace and security, to contain numerous emergencies, complex internal crises and regional and international tensions, to combat terrorism; to prevent war crimes, genocide and human rights violations, to build peace in post-conflict areas, to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, and to address other aggravated security challenges that pose a threat to human survival. Nevertheless, the outcome of these efforts and endeavours failed to meet our expectations and was associated, in some cases, with multifaceted failures to address some important matters on its agenda. This presented obstacles to the solution of certain issues, relating to the transparency of Security Council resolutions. The Security Council demonstrated total silence in certain cases of emerging security developments that threatened international peace and security, and it exceeded its mandate in some cases as specified in the Charter. There has also been excessive resort to Chapter VII of the Charter to address issues that do not necessarily pose an imminent threat to international peace and security. Additionally, the Security Council has intentionally fallen short in pursuing other resolutions relating to more pressing security issues, such as the developments in Palestine and the Middle East, which have been on the agenda of the Council since its establishment.

As we consider the inconsistencies in the current actions of the Security Council, we can see that they stem from its uneven structure, which was based on the international political and geographical reality of 1945, with some amendments made in 1963. In light of the current political, geographical, demographic and economic developments in the twenty-first century, we emphasize the importance of enabling the Security Council to play its natural and effective role of shouldering responsibility to orient international relations and implement international law, which requires urgent action to redress, in a systematic manner, the shortcomings in its working methods, as well as to ensure a total change in its structure and its response to today's regional and international political, geographical and economic changes and events.

My country has closely monitored all initiatives and deliberations held thus far at the bilateral and regional geographical levels and all formal and informal consultations organized by the General Assembly, including those pertaining to submitted draft resolutions. We also have followed other inclusive discussions held by facilitators appointed by the former President of the General Assembly and whose results were reflected in a final report issued last September. My country is deeply concerned with the unilateral positions expressed by some countries on this matter, which have prolonged the inability of the international community to achieve any progress and have increased the complexity of the matter on more than one level.

We therefore call on all concerned parties, including States and regional and political groups, to show the necessary political will and reflect a flexible, transparent and open approach in order to bring together disparate views and achieve international consensus on this matter. Our consultations must cover all aspects of this matter as an integral part of the comprehensive reform process of the United Nations system.

In this context, we also reiterate our position in favour of increasing the permanent and non-permanent membership of the Security Council. This expansion should be based on the principles of the sovereign equality of States and equitable and fair geographical representation. It should also ensure the required political international balance in the representation of small and developing countries, so as to reflect the concerns and interests of all peoples and all regions. We also call for the allocation of one permanent seat, in addition to at least two non-permanent seats, to the Group of Arab States, which would be filled on a rotating basis and in accordance with the practices endorsed by the League of Arab States in the framework of consultations and discussions with both the Group of African States and the Group of Asian States.

Efforts to reform the Security Council must not focus only on the size of an enlarged Council or on membership categories or regional representation, but also on other important issues such as the development of its agenda and its procedures and working methods, including its process of international decision-making and its relationship with other international entities. These reforms should also take into consideration the needs and interests of both developing and developed countries in a reasonable, objective, non-arbitrary and non-selective manner. Therefore, we support open views expressed in this regard, including efforts aimed at achieving an early reform in the Security Council in accordance with the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit.

In this context we request, first, the establishment of checks and balances on the use of the veto in order to reduce its use and commit the Security Council to submitting reports to the General Assembly on matters in which the right of veto was used. This would help in evaluating and overruling this right under the agenda item entitled "United for Peace" and in accordance with the progressive interpretation of Articles 11, 24 (1) and 35 of the United Nations Charter. This would ensure an impartial and democratic decision-making process within the Council, particularly on complicated and emergency matters in which urgent action is needed in order to avoid bloodshed and protect innocent lives and property, in pursuance of the principles of the Charter, the foundations of international humanitarian law and the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

Secondly, the Council should not, in accordance with Articles 41 and 42 of Chapter VII of the Charter, impose sanctions except for cases of aggression that pose an imminent threat to international peace and security. Sanctions should be imposed only after all other peaceful means have been exhausted, in accordance with the provisions of Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter, and only after elaborated extensive studies on their direct and indirect consequences in the short and long-term. This will help to avoid the risk of these sanctions turning into collective punishments on targeted States that punish innocent populations.

Thirdly, we also call for expanded opportunities for non-member States to participate in the activities of the Security Council and in activities that are directly related to matters under the Council's consideration. This would include countries whose interests are directly affected by its resolutions or countries that contribute to its peacekeeping operations with troops or equipment. We also believe there should be an increase in the number of open plenary meetings, particularly those involving draft resolutions on the deployment of peacekeeping missions in accordance with Articles 31 and 33 of the Charter and in the issuance of special, periodic and annual reports based on facts and documented information as well as analytic context in accordance with paragraph 3 of Article 24 of the Charter.

Fourthly, we must formalize the Security Council's rules of procedure in order to improve the Council's transparency and accountability, including non-infringement on the mandates of other regional and international entities and organs, such as the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with the Charter. The Security Council should strengthen its coordination with those organs so as to enhance its capacity and means to contain existing disputes and conflicts and prevent their serious implications for humankind from becoming realities.

We hope that our ongoing deliberations on this item will lead to a common and practical international approach in carrying out substantial and positive reform of the Security Council so that it can meet today's growing challenges in the area of international peacemaking and protect humanity from the destruction of war and the gross violations of human rights, and other grave threats in today's world.

Ms. Blum (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to thank the Ambassador of Indonesia, President of the Security Council, for presenting the report of the Council to the General Assembly for the period August 2006 to July 2007 (A/62/2).

We note with interest the inclusion of a brief introduction written by the delegation of China, which held the Council presidency for the month of July 2007. The introduction summarizes the work carried out, including the organization of the work of the Council. We are grateful for the effort to provide qualitative information, which enables the General Assembly to better evaluate the Council's work.

However, it is essential to draft a more comprehensive report that goes beyond the compilation of lists and addresses substantive issues, such as the criteria used by the Council in its decision-making. That would help to increase the transparency of its work and to enhance the assessment capacity of the General Assembly, as the central organ and authority of the United Nations system. To that end, it would also be helpful if the Council submitted special reports more often.

Clearly, the global reality presents challenges and opportunities for the Security Council. In that connection, without prejudice to the Council's ability to obtain information about topics of interest to it, we note with concern its tendency to address matters outside the sphere of competence entrusted to it by the Charter of the United Nations.

Year after year, upon receiving this report, we have noted the constant increase in the amount of the Council's work. That is yet another reason why, for the sake of greater efficiency, that organ should stop addressing matters that are within the purview of other bodies in the United Nations system.

I should also like to highlight the progress described in the report concerning the situation in Haiti. In that connection, we appreciate the Council's efforts, particularly the one-year extension of the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. We are confident that the Mission will be able to consolidate the constitutional and political process taking place in that country.

Reform of the Security Council complements the process of reforming the Organization and must continue to be a priority for the Assembly. In its current configuration, the Council does not match current realities in terms of either its representativity or its working methods. The status quo is not appropriate. We need reform that transforms the Council into a more democratic, representative, transparent and accountable organ.

My delegation recognizes the significant progress made within the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council Reform during the previous session of the General Assembly. We highlight the efforts and the leadership of Ms. Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, former President of the General Assembly. Likewise, Colombia thanks the facilitators for their efforts and for the presentation of their reports, which should serve as a point of departure for the next phase in the consideration of this matter.

It is undeniable that momentum has been created by the Working Group's efforts, particularly the identification of alternative ways to expand the Council's membership — including the transitional approach — that can serve as a basis for seeking the broadest possible agreement. The report of the Working Group, and in particular the reports of the facilitators, also serve as a basis for carrying out the General Assembly's decision to consider this issue at its sixty-second session with a view to achieving further results, including through intergovernmental negotiations.

Despite the consensus reached, various issues remain unresolved as a result of the environment in which the Working Group's report and the Assembly's decision were adopted. We need to restore confidence and to create positive conditions of transparency and goodwill. Attaining those objectives will be possible only if Security Council reform is considered in an open and participative forum where all States can express their points of view.

In that connection, my delegation reaffirms the role of the Working Group as the principal and only forum for considering this issue. The establishment of forums that could infringe upon the mandate and scope of the Working Group would be harmful to the reform process. Any further alternatives regarding this issue must be aimed at supporting the Working Group's efforts and building on the progress made within in it.

In that context, the Working Group must first set about defining a format, parameters and elements for possible intergovernmental negotiations. This first stage must be conducted in a consensual manner and without the imposition of artificial deadlines. Substantive aspects should not be considered until the framework, modalities and components of the negotiations are clear.

While we must not prejudge the outcome of the process, our goal must remain to create a more democratic and more representative Security Council in which current privileges are not perpetuated. My delegation reaffirms its support for the transitional approach, with an increase in the number of non-permanent seats and the possibility of re-election, provided it does not lead to a de facto permanent membership through repeated re-election.

Considering an increase in the Council's membership must not eclipse the priority of continuing to review and adjust its working methods in order to achieve a more democratic and transparent body with greater accountability. As on previous occasions, my delegation reaffirms the need to increase the participation of non-member States so that the decisions taken within this body can better reflect national and regional realities, on the basis of the particularities of each situation.

Moreover, my delegation believes that the Security Council's accountability to the General Assembly is the only way to achieve genuine transparency in the work of the Council and to strengthen the role of the Assembly as the Organization's sole universal deliberative and decision-making body.

Colombia, as a country that is part of the Uniting for Consensus movement, reiterates its willingness to contribute to an open and constructive process vis-à-vis the development of this issue, and expresses its readiness to consider proposals that could lead to the widest possible agreement among the Members of the Organization. We call on all other States to maintain an open and flexible approach with regard to this process.

Mr. Swe (Myanmar): May I express our deep appreciation to Ambassador Marty Natalegawa of the Republic of Indonesia, this month's President of the Security Council, for his introduction this morning of the report (A/62/2) of the Council covering the period from 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007. I would also like to express our sincere appreciation to Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, for the leadership she provided to find a way forward in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council.

The latest annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly was adopted by the Council on 25 October 2007, and published as an official document just last week. It would have been more helpful had it been made available much earlier. My delegation hopes that that situation will be remedied in the coming years.

Article 24, paragraph 1, of the Charter confers on the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. In carrying out its duties, the Council acts on behalf of the Member States. In that regard, we believe that the Council must be accountable to the General Assembly in a manner consistent with the Charter.

The question of equitable representation on and an increase in the membership of the Security Council has been on the agenda since 1979. Although there has been intensive debate on that important topic for many years, there was little progress until early this year, when the President of the General Assembly — the predecessor to the current President — urged members to focus on five key issues. Following extensive discussions on the key issues, a report was submitted to the President of the General Assembly in April 2007. We are encouraged to note that consultations were subsequently carried out with the membership on how to move the process forward, and that a report was subsequently submitted in June 2007. During the consultations, many members reiterated that the reform of the Security Council must be an integral part of the ongoing reform process of the United Nations and that the reform of the United Nations would be incomplete without a meaningful reform of the Council.

Notwithstanding new ideas that have emerged from the consultations, including the considerable interest in, and openness to, the intermediary approach, there still remain significant differences of views among members on the reform of the Security Council. Nevertheless, in a broad sense, all of us agree on the fact that no meaningful reform of the United Nations will be achieved without the reform of the Security Council itself.

We share the view that the United Nations must be reformed to be in step with today's global realities. However, the reform must not only reflect the increase in membership of the United Nations, but must also take into consideration the need for representation on the basis of equitable distribution, mutual benefit and cooperation.

In order to transform the Security Council into a more representative organ that is capable of addressing contemporary political and economic realities, its membership must be expanded in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. As developing countries are underrepresented in the Council, any reform must address that inequality.

After more than a decade of intensive discussions on this important matter, we are not yet much closer to our goal. In the meantime, there is much that can be improved with regard to the Council, even as it is presently constituted. That only needs political will.

First and foremost, Article 24, paragraph 2, of the Charter should be respected to ensure that the Council's actions are in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations. In that regard, we fully share the view expressed by the Non-Aligned Movement that the decision by the Security Council to initiate formal or informal discussions on the situation of any Member State or any issue that does not constitute a threat to international peace and security is contrary to Article 24 of the Charter.

The expansion of the membership of the Council will make it a more representative forum. However, expansion alone will not guarantee the effectiveness or transparency of the Council. Security Council reform must place special emphasis on substantive issues — as well as on its agenda, working methods and decision-making process — to make the Council more transparent and democratic.

The Council agenda should reflect the needs and interests of both developing and developed countries, ensure openness, transparency and consistency and abide by the provisions of the Charter, including Article 100, paragraph 2. Those are measures that can be taken immediately while we await the eventual reform and enlargement of the Security Council.

At the 2005 World Summit, heads of State and Government expressed support for the early reform of the Security Council as part of the overall reform of the Organization. Let us work constructively to reform the Council to make it more representative, effective and transparent and to further enhance the legitimacy of its decisions.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): I would like to start by thanking my colleague from Indonesia, the President of the Security Council for the month of November, for introducing to the General Assembly this morning the report (A/62/2) of the Security Council for the period 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007.

It is clear from the report that the serious issues before the Security Council are increasing, both in number and scope, and encompass all major regions as well as many cross-cutting thematic issues. However, let me limit my brief statement to the other agenda item under consideration today, namely, the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

Once again, this debate is being held early in this new session of the General Assembly. In fact, we have been speaking about this issue for nearly a decade and a half in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. The impasse on this fundamentally important issue does not reflect well on the United Nations. It is all the more lamentable, given the fact that no one disagrees with the conclusion of the 2005 World Summit, which acknowledged that early reform of the Security Council was

> "an essential element of our overall effort to reform the United Nations — in order to make it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent and thus to further enhance its effectiveness and the legitimacy and implementation of its decisions". (*resolution 60/1, para. 153*)

In an interview you gave to BBC Radio recently, Mr. President, you stated,

> "Reforming makes sense only if you achieve by that more transparency, more efficiency, and you reflect what is today's world situation."

We could not agree with you more, Mr. President. The stakes are high, and an equitable resolution on the reform questions of the Council could greatly add to comprehensive security. Our goals of reform of the Security Council are therefore far too important to abandon. We must continue to seek solutions with open minds and renewed vigour.

Throughout the years, Iceland has advocated a more representative and thus a more legitimate Council through expansion in membership, mirroring the changes that have taken place in the overall membership of the United Nations. We have also advocated more transparency and inclusiveness in the work of the Security Council. On this basis, Iceland was one of the sponsors in July 2005 of resolution A/59/L.64, better known as the Group of Four proposal, which, as we all know, never came to a vote. In a nutshell, Iceland's position has been the following: increase in both the permanent and the two-year elected members of the Security Council, a Council totalling about 25 countries, working methods reform based on the suggestions in the Group of Four and/or the so-called S-5 draft resolutions, as well as increased representation of developing countries. Since the tabling of the Group of Four proposal, we have had in-depth discussions on various models and possible compromises.

The valuable work on these issues during the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, the extensive efforts of the "5 plus 2" Permanent Representatives and inputs from all sides did frankly not produce much in the way of formal results other than the decision to continue the consideration of the issues during the present General Assembly session. However, we have the feeling that everyone now realizes more fully the need to show increased flexibility.

Ideas have been put forward, not ideal ones perhaps, but maybe the best possible substantial solutions at this time, as acknowledged by the five facilitators. These ideas need to be developed further. We are looking for new avenues and ways, which will have to encompass the issues of enlargement and working methods.

In the latest report of the Open-ended Working group from last September, we all agreed to continue our work on Security Council reform, including through intergovernmental negotiations during this session of the General Assembly. We welcome this call.

If fundamental previous positions are to be changed during the forthcoming negotiations and the idea of a defined period of transitional arrangements is to be adopted, an agreement has to be reached on a mandatory review after a specific number of years. If such compromises are to be negotiated, it must be done without prejudice to original positions.

Regardless of how our negotiations develop in the weeks and months ahead, they must be marked by a transparency that gives all Member States equal opportunities to participate. Or, as Ambassador Heller of Mexico said this morning, we must have a spirit of collaboration of all States.

Finally, we would like to congratulate the newly elected non-permanent members of the Security Council. Iceland, as a first-time candidate, hopes to join them on the Council for their second year there.

Mr. Choi Young-jin (Republic of Korea): Allow me to begin by thanking the President of the Security Council for this month, His Excellency Ambassador Marty Natalegawa of Indonesia, for introducing the annual report of the Security Council. I would also like to commend the efforts of the Secretariat in producing this report.

According to the report, African issues remained at the forefront of the Council's agenda, presenting both challenges and opportunities. Burundi, Sierra Leone and the Central African Republic all began the transition from conflict towards stability. We welcome and encourage the efforts of these countries and their peoples to consolidate the peace and stability that is necessary for nation-building.

In many other parts of the continent, however, instability continued, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sudan. The humanitarian crisis in the Darfur region of Sudan is still ongoing. The timely and full deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur is essential in moving the political process towards a comprehensive agreement. We hope to see improvements in both Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo over the coming year.

The security situation in Iraq is still unstable. We support the efforts of the international community, including the Security Council, to promote an inclusive and effective political process in Iraq, aimed at preserving the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Republic of Korea remains committed to helping Iraq implement the International Compact with Iraq and has been maintaining its troop presence there since 2003.

Lebanon has continued to experience political crisis and instability in recent months. We support the continuing efforts of the Lebanese Government and the Security Council to establish peace and stability in the country. Through our participation in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, the Republic of Korea is pleased to contribute to that endeavour.

Elsewhere in Asia, we are deeply concerned about the unstable security situation throughout Afghanistan. Re-establishing lasting security requires a multidimensional strategy, coordinating military, police, political, and economic and social activities. The international community must continue to assist Afghanistan in its transition to peace and stability.

Turning to non-proliferation, the nuclear issue in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has rightfully attracted the attention of the international community. The recent inter-Korean summit and the progress at the Six-Party Talks have created considerable momentum for the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We welcome the significant progress at the Six-Party Talks last month in Beijing, at which the Democratic People's Republic of Korea agreed to the disablement of its three main nuclear facilities by the end of this year. We hope that the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula will be achieved quickly and effectively, contributing to peace and security in the region and beyond.

We fully recognize the importance of reforming the Security Council to make it more representative, accountable, transparent, efficient and democratic. We believe that these principles are widely shared among

Member States and that they should be upheld in our efforts to reform the Council. Given the enormous implications of Security Council reform for the future of the United Nations, my delegation has long held the view that any proposal on Security Council reform should garner the general agreement of the membership, well above the required majority in the General Assembly. We believe strongly in this principle of general agreement, which should be applied at every stage of our negotiations.

An integral part of reforming the Security Council is improving its working methods. We welcome the initiatives that have so far been put forward to enhance the transparency, accountability and inclusiveness of the Council's work and we are pleased to see that the Council itself is considering several such initiatives. We support the steps taken so far by the Council in this regard. Building on this progress, we believe that further reform is needed to make the Council more transparent, democratic and efficient.

On the issue of its membership, we share the position of the Uniting for Consensus (UFC) group that the best way to reform the membership of the Council is through an increase in non-permanent, elected seats, not through the addition of permanent members. The UFC proposal would make it possible for each region to devise its own arrangements to ensure that large, medium and small States are all represented in an enlarged Security Council.

Many delegations have pointed out that the current composition of the Council is based on the world of 1945, and thus fails to reflect the changes over the past 60 years. We agree. By exactly the same principle, we believe that we should not freeze into place a new structure based on today's realities. The pace of global change has never been greater, and it seems reasonable to expect that in a few decades the world might be different from today in ways no one could have predicted.

We believe that the addition of permanent members would not be in the best interests of the United Nations or its Member States. It would be contrary to the values that we have developed over time and seek to promote. It would undercut the effectiveness of the Council. It would heavily impair its accountability as well. There is no democracy where a single election entitles the winner to remain in office in perpetuity. For those reasons, we are opposed to the addition of new permanent members to the Security Council.

The Republic of Korea believes that the discussion of Security Council reform during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly should build upon the progress made during the sixty-first session. Given the stark differences of view on a number of core issues, we believe that the intermediate approach proposed by the facilitators during the sixty-first session is our best hope for progress. My delegation would like to emphasize once again that the Open-ended Working Group is the legitimate place to discuss Security Council reform, both because Member States agreed on its continuing role for the sixty-second session and because it can accommodate the views and concerns of the majority of the membership in a broadly representative, transparent and democratic process of debate.

My delegation strongly believes that we should avoid creating an atmosphere of confrontation among Member States, which could seriously divide the United Nations and endanger the United Nations reform process as a whole. We should refrain from presenting unilateral proposals that force divisive and potentially damaging discussions among Member States. In this regard, we cannot but note with concern that a draft resolution had already been circulated prior to today's discussion.

The Republic of Korea remains ready to engage constructively in further discussion, with a view to reaching general agreement on this critical issue. In that regard, Mr. President, we would welcome an initiative on your part to move the process forward, which we trust would be carried out in an impartial and all-inclusive manner. We hope that, in our collective wisdom, we can find a method consistent with our shared values by which to reform the Security Council so that it can better fulfil its mandate.

Mr. Wang Guangya (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Charter of the United Nations designates the Security Council as the principal organ with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Over the past year, the Council has continued to work actively in addressing regional hot-spot issues, maintaining regional stability, helping with the post-conflict reconstruction of the countries concerned and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. My delegation is encouraged that the Council has achieved impressive results on all those fronts. While fulfilling its responsibilities, the Council is also trying continuously to explore ways to improve its working methods, enhance transparency and strengthen communication and interaction with other United Nations organs and all parties concerned. I am convinced that the Council will stay on that track.

As President of the Council for the month of July in 2007, China drafted the introduction section of the annual report of the Security Council to the Assembly (A/62/2). Other members of the Council, based on their experiences, put forward many proposals on that section and finally reached consensus. We hope that the report gives an accurate, comprehensive and balanced account of the work of the Council. It is true that there is still much room for further improvement in the work of the Council. China is ready to continue to make efforts, together with others, in that regard so as to enable the Council to better fulfil its responsibilities under the Charter.

Since the 2005 World Summit, there has been a series of positive results in overall reform of the United Nations, thanks to the common efforts of all Member States. As an important component of United Nations reform, reform of the Security Council has been the focus of attention by all sides and remains a tough issue, involving complex difficulties of various kinds. It is encouraging to note that, as expected by all sides, certain new dynamics and positive developments emerged in the discussions on Council reform during the last session of the Assembly.

First of all, strong political consensus has emerged among all Member States that the Security Council needs to improve its working methods and increase its representativity. If Council reform can achieve a "soft landing" and produce further positive achievements, it will open a window of opportunity to increase cohesiveness among the Member States and enhance the effectiveness of the multilateral machinery.

Secondly, while adhering to their respective positions, the majority of Member States are adopting a more pragmatic approach towards the Security Council reform process. As stated in the report of the five facilitators appointed by the previous President of the Assembly (A/61/47, annex II), a significant number of Member States displayed flexibility, expressed willingness to explore a viable compromise solution and held the view that any reform formula should enjoy the widest possible political acceptance by Member States. Compared with two years ago, all parties concerned are leaning more towards constructive consultations and practical cooperation on the question of Council reform.

Thirdly, at its sixty-first session, the Assembly took note by consensus of the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council (A/61/47), mandating the Group to continue its work during the sixty-second session of the Assembly and agreeing to launch an intergovernmental negotiation process on Council reform. The report submitted by the five facilitators summarized well the positions of all sides and the possibility for progress and put forward some valuable recommendations, which broadened the horizon for future consultations.

While the political will of Member States is crucial to the progress achieved so far, we must not forget the important role played by Her Excellency Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, the President of the Assembly at its previous session. China appreciates the approach taken both by Ms. Al-Khalifa and by the facilitators she appointed of always dealing with Council reform in a constructive way and engaging in extensive consultations with all sides to seek a consensus that accommodates the concerns of all. That is an important practice in the discussion of Council reform, and we should continue to follow that approach.

Reform of the Security Council involves the vital interests of all Member States, and the aforementioned progress was not easy to come by. It therefore makes it all the more important that we cherish the current positive momentum, maintain adequate flexibility and continue our constructive consultations, with a view to achieving general agreement on concrete formulas for Council reform. China is open to the launching of an intergovernmental negotiation process. In our view, agreeing to start the negotiations is the first step of the process, and we must define the basic framework and content of the negotiating process so that we all know what will be negotiated and how the negotiations will be conducted.

China believes that, as an open platform with the participation of all 192 Member States, the Open-ended Working Group could and should play an important role in the future negotiating process. That will ensure that the negotiations are open and inclusive and that all Member States participate equally. Regarding the negotiating process, we must first reach agreement on the entire framework through full consultations among all sides, because an edifice can be built only on a firm foundation.

Simply stated, years of practice have attested to the extreme sensitivity and complexity of the issue of Security Council reform. Real progress on this issue requires all sides to adopt new thinking and new initiatives, build upon the current positive interactions and reach the widest possible consensus through patient consultations. We call on all sides to take as a priority the maintenance of unity among Member States, show genuine political good faith, take practical measures to meet their interlocutors half way and, at the same time, avoid any unilateral action that might complicate the situation, all with a view to creating a favourable political atmosphere for working out a general agreement through negotiations.

China has consistently supported the necessary and reasonable reform of the Security Council and is willing to continue to explore, together with others, appropriate formulas and ways for reforming the Council. We also support the continued effort by the Security Council to improve its working methods, efficiency and decision-making procedures so as to give greater expression to the views of the broader United Nations membership.

I wish to reaffirm our position that reform of the Security Council must accommodate the interests and concerns of all sides and put priority on increasing the representation of developing countries, especially African countries. Any formula on Security Council reform that does not address the concerns of Africa can hardly win endorsement of the entire United Nations membership and will not have the backing of China. That is one of China's fundamental principles regarding Security Council reform.

Ms. Bethel (Bahamas): Like previous speakers, I would like to thank the Permanent Representative of Indonesia for his presentation of the report of the Security Council contained in document A/62/2. The Council's reports have been the object of much comment over the years, given their potential as a major point of interaction between these two principal organs of the Organization. That potential takes on great significance because, according to Article 24, paragraph 1, of the Charter, the States Members of the United Nations confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf.

In as much as the Council acts on behalf of all United Nations Member States in the maintenance of international peace and security, and while few would argue that the report is not comprehensive, many countries, the Bahamas included, agree that it could and should be more substantive and analytical, presenting a reflective view and assessment of the Council's activities. It is also in this vein that the Bahamas supports the idea of an interactive exchange between the Security Council and the General Assembly when these reports are being considered by the latter.

The report before us today certainly illustrates the breath of the actions undertaken by the Council on our behalf, and the report reveals that there has been a continuous increase in the volume and scope of the Council's activities. The greater number of these activities was, in our view, rightfully geared towards bringing resolution to a number of conflict and post-conflict situations, particularly in Africa. We commend the Council for its focus in this area, especially in the light of the acknowledged nexus between peace, security and development and of the need to ensure that Africa makes significant strides towards the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

The Bahamas also welcomes the Council's sustained focus on our sister Caribbean nation, Haiti, through the activities of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), in an effort to resolve the complex challenges confronting that country. Here, we note with satisfaction the Council's adoption of its resolutions 1702 (2006) and 1743 (2007) during the period covered by the report, extending the mandate of MINUSTAH on both occasions. Security Council resolution 1780 (2007), which was adopted just last month and which extends the MINUSTAH mandate for a full year, is equally welcome and appropriate. It is absolutely imperative that the international community continue to provide Haiti with the required assistance and support for its stabilization and reconstruction in the months and years ahead.

The Bahamas also takes a keen interest in the work of the various counter-terrorism bodies of the Council, particularly their efforts to increase coordination in their respective fields of work, as well as their provision of technical assistance to those States in need. The sometimes Herculean effort required to implement critical counter-terrorism measures adopted by the Security Council, as well as to meet reporting obligations under various resolutions, continues to pose a challenge to many States, particularly small States. The Bahamas would encourage the Council to continue its efforts to coordinate much-needed assistance to States in all aspects of their counter-terrorism obligations, in our collective fight against that scourge.

In tandem with the report of the Security Council, we are also, appropriately, considering the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council contained in document A/61/47.

The Bahamas acknowledges the service and efforts of the Member States that are members of the Security Council. We believe it is vital that all Member States with the capacity to serve on the Council be given an opportunity to do so and, therefore, we feel that the expansion of the membership of the Council is appropriate and should be given careful and due consideration. A Council that is truly representative of the present world must more equitably reflect the current membership of the Organization, allowing developing countries, including small developing States, to play a greater role in its activities.

Expanding the membership of the Security Council is, however, only one dimension of the reform that needs to take place in that body. The other, equally important, dimension is reform of the Council's working methods. Many Member States continue to place great emphasis and importance on the working methods of the Security Council as a means of making the body more transparent, inclusive, accountable and effective.

The Bahamas welcomes the Open-ended Working Group's call for continued consideration of these issues during the current session of the General Assembly. We believe that intergovernmental negotiations on all aspects of Security Council reform are the next important step in advancing this process. My delegation looks forward to participating fully in that exercise.

The adage which states that with great power comes great responsibility applies most appropriately to the Security Council. We believe that primary among the Council's responsibilities is that of engaging regularly and constructively in dialogue with those on whose behalf it acts, in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. My delegation sincerely hopes that this debate and the ensuing relevant discussions will all contribute to that end.

Mr. Khalilzad (United States of America): At the outset, Mr. President, I would like to commend you on your efforts to work with Member States to achieve comprehensive and much-needed reform of the United Nations. During the general debate held here in September, heads of State or Government identified numerous new challenges facing the United Nations in the twenty-first century. Peace, security, conflict mitigation and reform in the broader Middle East, post-conflict peacebuilding in Africa, non-proliferation and the fight against extremism and global terrorism are just a few of the issues that the United Nations will be called upon to address. The Security Council, as the primary guarantor of international peace and security, must be able to continue to deal successfully with these and other threats to global security.

The United States recognizes that the world has changed, requiring the United Nations, including the Security Council, to adapt. The changed world suggests that the modernization of the Security Council and the greater United Nations system is both appropriate and timely.

Regarding Security Council reform, we believe that expansion of the Council must ensure that its ability to respond with agility, credibility and efficacy to threats to international peace and security is preserved. Qualified candidates for permanent membership must have demonstrated their ability to act as responsible stakeholders in responding to global challenges to peace and security. They must also maintain a strong commitment to democracy, human rights and non-proliferation and provide substantial peacekeeping or financial contributions to the United

Nations. Those requirements suggest only a modest expansion of the Council.

As President Bush said in his address to the General Assembly (see A/62/PV.4), the United States continues to support Japan's candidacy for permanent membership. Other nations should be considered as well, although we have not made any decisions about which other countries might qualify.

The United States does not have a specific proposal for Council expansion. Despite our openness to the prospect of expansion, we have noted that persistent differences among Member States' positions have prevented previous proposals from garnering widespread support. We therefore look forward to reviewing new proposals to achieve a modest expansion of the Council that are capable of achieving broad-based support.

The United States continues to believe that comprehensive reform of the entire United Nations system is needed to increase its effectiveness and credibility in addressing the new challenges of the twenty-first century. Expansion of the Security Council should be part of a meaningful package of reforms in other priority areas. We support efforts by the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly to achieve our shared goal of attaining a balanced and comprehensive reform of the United Nations, and we believe that such efforts will serve to reinvigorate the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council.

I look forward to hearing the views of other Member States and hope that this discussion will take us one step closer to achieving our shared goal of United Nations reform: to make this Organization as effective as possible to deliver for the next 60 years, on the goals for which it was created.

In conclusion, let me express my gratitude to you, Mr. President, for helping this body engage in a constructive dialogue on this important issue. I would also like to thank the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Natalegawa of Indonesia, for his remarks introducing the annual report of the Council (A/62/2). The report provides all Member States with a transparent and comprehensive review of the intensive work of the Security Council.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): I would like to begin, Mr. President, by thanking you for convening today's plenary meeting. My delegation attaches great importance to this joint debate on two items: the annual report on the activities of the Security Council and reform of the Council. It provides a timely and useful opportunity to reflect on the way forward on the key issues involved here: structural reform of the Council and improvement of the Council's working methods.

At the opening of the sixty-second session's general debate (see A/62/PV.4), Sir, you identified Security Council reform as among the five priority topics to be addressed during this session. Japan welcomes your strong interest in this issue. We place high expectations on your role as President of the General Assembly in advancing Council reform and achieving concrete results during this session.

First, I would like to touch briefly upon this year's report of the Security Council (A/62/2). I thank Ambassador Natalegawa, the President of the Council for this month, for his presentation of the report to the General Assembly. The report describes the continuing active work of the Council, which has primary responsibility for international peace and security. It also indicates how the Council has incorporated efforts to tackle new challenges in its work. In that context, some criticism has been raised, stating that such efforts constitute encroachment by the Council on the responsibilities of the Assembly. As the concept of security expands, however, Japan believes that positive outcomes will be attained as a whole when the Assembly and the Council work together in a complementary manner within their respective areas of responsibility.

Japan supports the effort to increase the transparency of the work of the Council. We note that this year the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, under the able leadership of Ambassador Burian, the Permanent Representative of Slovakia, urged all relevant actors to ensure the implementation of the recommendations contained in the note by the President of the Council (S/2006/507), in the preparation of which my delegation actively participated, and that the Group continues to explore measures to further enhance the transparency of the work of the Council.

It is an important development that the Working Group held a discussion on how to improve the report drafting process; this is evidence of the Council's own efforts to improve transparency. Japan would like to express its sincere appreciation for the dedicated work of the mission of Slovakia and would like to urge all Members, Council members and other relevant actors to redouble their efforts to implement fully the recommendations contained in the Note by the President.

Japan welcomes the fact that momentum towards the realization of Security Council reform was gained during the past session and carried over to this session. The majority of the political leaders of Member States stressed the necessity of Security Council reform during the general debate of the current session. We therefore welcome today's timely debate and hope that it will accelerate the move to the next phase of the process.

At the end of the past session, the Assembly decided that the question of Security Council reform should be considered during the sixty-second session of the Assembly, so that further concrete results might be achieved, including through intergovernmental negotiations, building on the progress achieved so far, particularly at the sixty-first session, as well as the positions of and proposals made by Member States.

I have exchanged views with almost every Permanent Representative to the United Nations here in New York since recently assuming my post. I am encouraged that the view is very broadly shared that the current composition of the Council should be reformed as soon as possible and that we should produce concrete results on this matter during this session.

Security Council reform has been under discussion in the Open-ended Working Group for the past 14 years. Through those discussions, the position of each country has been made quite clear. We are concerned that if we again defer reform and the current composition of the Council continues to remain unchanged, not only will the effectiveness and representativeness of the Council be compromised in the years to come, but its credibility will be increasingly questioned.

With that in mind, we should enter into the negotiation process on Security Council reform as soon as possible. This issue is our common responsibility, as the present representatives of Member States — our responsibility to the generations to come. States Members of the United Nations have agreed solemnly to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the Charter. Therefore, the composition of the Council must be reformed to reflect the current world reality and to make the Council more representative and more effective. As we reflect on the history of international relations, we must demonstrate to the world that we have the wisdom and indeed the capacity to reform the Security Council through diplomacy and negotiations.

The reform of the Security Council is not a matter for just a few Member States. At issue is the enhancement of the functions of the principal organs of the United Nations. Enhancing the functioning of the Security Council is integral to that crucial task. Without meaningful reform of the Security Council, therefore, the reform of the United Nations will be incomplete.

In order to enhance the functioning of the Security Council, we must reform its composition to reflect today's world and to address effectively the needs of the twenty-first century. To achieve that goal, it is necessary that those countries that have major responsibilities in implementing the decisions of the Security Council with regard to international peace and security should occupy permanent seats in the Security Council.

We continue to stress that the Security Council must be reformed through modifications that include an expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership, with the inclusion of both developed and developing countries, so as to make the Council more representative, more efficient and more transparent while enhancing its credibility.

In September, a new Cabinet was formed in Japan. The position of the Japanese Government on the reform of the Security Council remains unchanged. As Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda stated in his policy speech in the Diet on 1 October,

> "In order to be able to make further contribution to the international community, Japan will pursue United Nations Security Council reform and permanent membership in the Security Council."

I would like to take the opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the many delegations that have expressed their support for Japan in that regard.

Japan also continues to attach great importance to improving the working methods of the Council, as an important pillar of Security Council reform. We look forward to further progress in that area.

We reaffirm the necessity of achieving concrete results on Security Council reform during the current session. During the general debate in the plenary on 28 September, Foreign Minister Koumura of Japan urged Member States to take such action. It is now time for us to move Security Council reform to the negotiation phase. Japan will participate actively in intergovernmental negotiations and in a flexible manner, with a view to achieving concrete results during this session.

We hope that you, Mr. President, will continue to provide us with the necessary guidance on this vital question. We would like to request that you exercise your leadership in initiating a negotiation process and that you convene an appropriate forum for such negotiations at the earliest possible date.

Mr. Salgueiro (Portugal): I would like to start by thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting and for providing us with an opportunity to assess the state of play in the reform of the Security Council and to reflect on how the process should move forward, while we attempt to take advantage of the productive and substantive work done during the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. I would also like to express my appreciation to the Permanent Representative of Indonesia for his introduction this morning of the annual report (A/62/2) of the Security Council.

Two years have already elapsed since the 2005 World Summit, at which heads of State and Government declared that "We support early reform of the Security Council — an essential element of our overall effort to reform the United Nations." (*resolution 60/1, para. 153*)

In the two years since then, we devoted most of our attention and energy to other aspects of United Nations reform. As a result of our joint efforts, important results were achieved, showing that a convergence of political will is attainable even on the most complex issues. Some momentum on Security Council reform was regained during the sixty-first session. We thank the former President of the General Assembly for her commitment to that objective and for putting in place a methodology of work that led to the elaboration of two far-sighted reports.

We also wish to take this opportunity to commend the work done by our competent and skillful colleagues — namely, the Permanent Representatives of Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands and Tunisia — and to congratulate them for the quality of the reports they have prepared.

While exploring new and innovative ideas based on the two different concepts of transitional approaches and intermediary arrangements, the reports prepared during the sixty-first session managed to move the debate from the repetition of initial static positions to the introduction of a new dynamic in the discussions. That approach allowed us to discern some movement in the area of Security Council reform.

Many questions still remain unresolved in the various aspects addressed by the reports, notably with respect to the review exercise, the categories of membership, the question of regional representation, the size of an enlarged Council and working methods. The Portuguese position on those issues is on record. At this stage, I would just like to highlight two very important ideas that emerged from the work done during the sixty-first session that we find to be in tune with our long-standing positions.

The first is that the debates held during the previous session and the reports I have mentioned stressed the need to duly consider the concerns of medium-sized and small States. We were wary of some of the ideas flagged during the debates of the sixty-first session that pointed to the notion that the interests of medium-sized and small countries should be dealt with in the framework of working methods — assuming that agreement on Security Council expansion was first and foremost a matter of concern just for major and medium Powers. Notwithstanding the apparent importance of enhanced working methods that would ensure better access to the work of the Security Council, we are of the view that the enlargement of the Council — which definitely needs to be pursued — must contemplate the concerns of medium-sized and small States and take into consideration the impact of the relative positions of those States in the international community. After all, we must not lose sight of the fact that, in accordance with Article 24 of the Charter, the Security Council acts on behalf of all Member States.

The other idea is contained in the conclusion contained in the April report of the five facilitators, namely, that a definitive solution to the question of the veto might not be feasible at this stage and that Member States might wish therefore to address it in the framework of the review process. In fact, it is our belief that the requirement for concurring votes, established in Article 27, paragraph 3, of the Charter, should not be expanded beyond the current permanent members of the Security Council.

We now face the responsibility of making good use of the work done during the sixty-first session to seize and build on the momentum achieved, so that further progress can be made in the current session of the General Assembly. We need to find appropriate ways to implement the provisions set out in paragraphs (d) and (e) of the draft decision contained in paragraph 21 of the report (A/61/47) of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. We rely on your guidance, Mr. President, and your experience and wise advice in the process of defining the best way to move forward. But we also know that your authority and wisdom cannot replace the political will of the membership and its ability to strike compromises.

As the June report of the two facilitators puts it,

> "While the continued leadership of the President of the General Assembly will be essential, substantive input from Member States will be indispensable in order to take the discussions to the next stage." (*A/61/47, annex IV, para. 26*)

And referring to the recommendation to start intergovernmental negotiations, the facilitators concluded that "Member States should have primary ownership of such a process". *(A/61/47, annex IV, para. 27).*

Portugal stands ready to engage in a process of negotiations that is truly intergovernmental, open, transparent and inclusive. This phrase may sound like mere jargon, but we believe that it is profoundly true, in particular on the subject of Security Council reform, in which every Member State has a stake.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Events of recent years show clearly that global problems of security — such as, settling acute regional conflicts, fighting international terrorism and fighting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction — demand collective approaches. The best forum for working out such issues is, indeed, the United Nations, which has a unique legitimacy. So we see our basic task to be the strengthening of the United Nations as a universal mechanism to consider and settle problems facing mankind.

Of course, changes in the world today and the emergence of new challenges and threats require that the United Nations and its main bodies adapt to the new realities, and that includes the Security Council. For example, it would be in the general interest to make more active use of the peacemaking potential of the United Nations. Qualitative improvement would include making the Military Staff Committee, a charter body, under the Security Council, fully operational. That organ could work in a new format, involving all members of the Security Council.

Reform of the United Nations, including such an important element as enlarging the Security Council, is not an end in itself. Any changes must be geared towards enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations and strengthening its central role in peacekeeping. It is essential, in deciding on reform, that we be guided by the need to preserve the inter-State nature of this world Organization. In order to achieve this goal, one has to have the broadest possible agreement of Member States on all changes that are being envisaged.

Every year, all States Members of the United Nations have an opportunity to gather together and discuss the results of the work of the Security Council, as reflected in its annual report, which was introduced to us today on behalf of the Council by its President, the Ambassador of Indonesia, Mr. Marty Natalegawa. Such an open and transparent debate is extremely important.

The fact that, as in the past, the Council has been actively involved in settling the most important contemporary problems shows that the international community and the members of the Council themselves are showing the proper respect for the irreplaceable and unique principle of the legitimacy of Council decisions. That underlies the entire process of the settling of international peace and security issues. But at the same time, that means that the Council bears a heavy responsibility vis-à-vis the decisions it takes and ensuring that those decisions are implemented.

One important factor here is improving the interaction between the Council and other bodies within the United Nations system, namely, the General Assembly, the Secretariat, new entities such as the Peacebuilding Commission, and also regional and other intergovernmental organizations. Another factor would be improving the working methods of the Council. We have to make sure not only that we adopt resolutions and make declarations or statements, but also that we take a strategic approach, trying to ensure implementation of the decisions that we have taken, and that we continue improving the partnership and dialogue with countries that contribute troops to peacekeeping operations and with other players in peacekeeping.

The range of views and approaches of Members to this question of increasing the membership of the Security Council is still is very broad. We support the idea that we continue in this session seeking a common denominator through collective and transparent efforts, inter alia, through negotiations and showing the necessary flexibility and patience.

We fully support the view that reforming the Council should ensure the broadest possible support by Members of the Organization. In any event, there should be a larger majority than simply the legally required two-thirds majority of Members of the General Assembly. Our common task is to lay a foundation for further consolidation of the authority and potential of the Security Council as the principal body for the maintenance of international peace and security.

We all carry a heavy responsibility to ensure that poorly thought out steps to reform the Council don't lead to polarization and division among Member States, thereby weakening instead of strengthening the United Nations and the Security Council, and also thereby complicating efforts on other reform tracks in the Organization.

Russia's position of principle on the reform of the Security Council is well known and includes a lot of room for flexibility. We are ready to continue the painstaking work of bringing approaches closer together, so that we can choose the optimal model for future Council membership. We are ready to consider any reasonable option for increasing membership, including the so-called intermediary approach, if it gets broad agreement within the United Nations. One key guideline is that the Council should be more representative, but that should not be detrimental to its ability to do its work in maintaining international peace and security.

Accordingly, we support the idea that the Council should not be too large. We believe that it would be counterproductive to curtail the powers of the current permanent members of the Security Council, including the veto as a whole.

There is a continuing positive trend in the working methods of the Security Council — including enhancing openness in the work of the Council and increasing dialogue with non-members. A lot has been done within current procedures to ensure that interested States are able to report their views to members of the Council and to get fuller and more up-to-date information about the work of the Council. The facts and statistics cited by the President of the Council this morning speak for themselves in this respect.

Today, our common task is to focus on implementing the changes that were agreed to in the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. Those changes are designed to promote greater transparency and openness in the work of the Council. The experience of reaching agreement on those changes — and it was not always easy — clearly showed that only initiatives to improve working methods of the Council that enjoy consensus support of its members can really help us to achieve progress in reforming this primary organ of the United Nations.

Rational transparency in the work of the Security Council includes developing dialogue between the Sanctions Committees and a broad range of States and regional and other organizations so as to improve the sanctions regime, and ensure strict compliance with embargoes imposed by the Security Council on arms deliveries in conflict areas. We are ready to continue with a constructive and transparent exchange of views, inter alia, within the Assembly's open-ended working group of the whole on the whole range of issues relating to expanding the Security Council.

Mr. Ould Hadrami (Mauritania) (*spoke in Arabic*): Permit me at the outset to thank the representative of Indonesia, which holds the Security Council presidency this month, for presenting the report of the Council to the General Assembly (A/62/2). The report indicates a significant increase in the volume and scope of the Council's activities last year.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the African Union (AU) by the Permanent Representative of Angola, Chair of the AU for November, and with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We also wish to congratulate the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Burkina Faso, Viet Nam, Croatia and Costa Rica on their recent election as non-permanent members of the Security Council for the period 2008-2009.

The United Nations has changed since it was founded on 24 October 1945, when 51 Member States signed its Charter. Today, the Organization has more than 190 Member States. In the light of that fact, combined with the ever-increasing number of global and intertwined problems and interests caused by globalization, the Organization must be restructured and modernized, especially with respect to the Security Council, which bears responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Reform of the Security Council has seen no progress for more than 14 years. In 1993, given the importance of the matters addressed by the Council, which is the United Nations organ entrusted with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the General Assembly adopted its resolution 48/26, establishing an Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. Without the Security Council, the backbone of the United Nations, and without peace and security, there would be no economic or social development.

The Islamic Republic of Mauritania firmly believes in the purposes and principles for which the United Nations was established. Therefore, we believe that there must be more equitable representation within the Security Council, given the right of the African continent to occupy a permanent Council seat. Indeed, Africa is the only continent not to have a permanent seat on that important and sensitive body. Because the majority of armed conflicts and disputes have taken place on African soil, Africa cannot be excluded from permanent representation on the Council. We must correct this great injustice. Seventy per cent of the resolutions of the United Nations, including Security Council resolutions, deal primarily with the developing world, particularly Africa. It is thus worthy to have Africa participate in adopting such resolutions. This can come about by granting Africa a permanent seat on the Council alongside the current five permanent members.

My country fully supports the Sirte Declaration and the Ezulwini Consensus, which set out the legitimate and just claims of the African continent. Specifically, the African continent is requesting two permanent seats with veto power and two non-permanent seats. Thus, Africa would have two permanent and five non-permanent seats in total. In the light of the Arab and African components of the continent's social fabric, it should be up to the African Union to decide which States should occupy those seats.

It is high time for serious and substantive reform of United Nations bodies, particularly the Security Council, which must be expanded to lay the foundation for true democracy within the United Nations system. We hope that the Ezulwini Consensus, which clearly reflects the positions and interests of African countries, will be respected as the foundation for any future consultations and arrangements decided upon by the General Assembly. My delegation also supports the legitimate requests of Germany and Japan for permanent Council seats, given their important roles in the maintenance of international peace and security, their considerable efforts to ensure sustainable development in developing countries, and their contributions to United Nations efforts in that regard.

Mr. Badji (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): My country, Senegal, endorses the statement made by His Excellency Mr. Ismael Abraão Gaspar Martins, permanent representative of Angola, on behalf of the Group of African States. In my national capacity, I should like to make a few additional comments following the presentation of the annual report of the Security Council (A/62/2) by the permanent representative of Indonesia, whom we thank.

The Senegalese delegation believes that, more than a mere ritual at every session of the General Assembly, the submission of the Security Council's report to this principal body of the Organization should be an opportunity for Member States to discuss in depth the initiatives and actions taken on all our behalf by that important organ, which is entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security.

However, we must acknowledge that, in its current form, the report of the Council does not give us enough information about the motivations and reasons behind Council action or non-action. Therefore, it does not give us information that is likely to lend itself to fruitful discussion. That is why we express once again our hope to receive more detailed and analytical reports from the Council.

More than ever before, the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council is a timely issue that concerns a large majority of Member States. The reason is that reform of the Council has become necessary, owing to two requirements: modernization and justice.

Modernization is required because today, no one denies any longer that the world's realities are totally different from those that formed the basis for the Council's structuring in 1945. Justice — as that word is being used here, equitable representation within the Security Council — refers to an obligation to ensure justice in the redistribution of roles and responsibilities within a reformed Council. Thus, Senegal believes that any effort to achieve equitable representation must begin by correcting an injustice, namely, that Africa is the only continent without a permanent seat on the Security Council.

Senegal, which shares the Common African Position, believes that an increase in the number of Council members in the two current categories, permanent and non-permanent, remains necessary. Indeed, the two challenges to which I have referred — adjusting the Council to new geopolitical realities and making it more equitable — require that we expand both categories. However, we believe that, whatever the number or formula chosen, the representation of developing countries and small States must be increased.

With regard to the right of the veto — which is, quite rightly, the object of much criticism — we believe that the demands of modernization and justice in action require that we deal with it in a realistic and responsible manner, bearing in mind that a single country cannot and must not block or paralyse Security Council action, often for interests that are different from those of the international community as a whole. If we want the United Nations to maintain its credibility and authority, we must ensure that the action or inaction of the Security Council is based on just motives that are in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

Her Excellency, Sheika Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, involved Member States in a dynamic process guided by seven facilitators, during which, many views and positions were expressed by States, groups of States and interest groups. The report of the two last facilitators appointed by Ms. Al-Khalifa (A/61/47, annex IV) proposes several possible paths that could serve as the basis for intergovernmental negotiations. The concept of reform in stages, based on the intermediary approach which involves a review clause, seems interesting and could enable States to overcome certain differences of opinion. This idea, however, does not exclude the possibility of the proposed reform being sufficiently ambitious, thus responding to the views widely expressed by Member States.

The momentum from which the question of Security Council reform benefited during the sixty-first session of the General Assembly deserves to be sustained and strengthened during the present session. We count, Sir, on your diligence so that all Member States commit themselves anew to deepening the process already under way. What is at stake is definitely worth it, if we want the Security Council, the principal organ entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security, to enjoy greater legitimacy, credibility and authority.

Mr. Matussek (Germany): Let me first thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting of the session of the General Assembly. I would already like to express my sincere gratitude to you for doing so because I am convinced that this meeting will move the reform of the Security Council forward. You yourself stressed at the opening of the sixty-second session on 18 September (see A/62/PV.1) that you would take the mandate of the sixty-first session's decision (see A/61/PV.109) seriously and build on the momentum created in the past few months. We are ready to support you: to support you in your endeavour to start negotiations on concrete text proposals. And we will show flexibility.

Many colleagues have already spoken today. When I try to summarize today's discussion, I think there is one common feeling: Security Council reform has reached a critical stage. There is a shared sense of urgency: if we are not able to achieve reform during the sixty-second session, we will lose momentum and we will lose public support in many countries, where it will be said that the United Nations is unable to reform itself. The United Nations system as a whole will lose credibility and, in particular, the most important body for the maintenance of peace and security, the Security Council, will, in the eyes of many, lose legitimacy — at a time when the legitimacy and effectiveness of the Security Council are crucial if we are to resolve a number of vital issues.

The conclusion I draw from today's discussion is that the overwhelming majority of members have a clear sense of our common responsibility. We have to bring about reform of the Security Council during the sixty-second session in order to make the Security Council more legitimate, more effective, more representative, more accountable and more transparent. Our discussion during the sixty-first session showed that there is enough common ground for a reform project. We have a good chance of achieving the required two-thirds majority.

What is the way forward? First, as to procedure: we have to start negotiations as soon as possible, and that means in the next few weeks. We need an appropriate mechanism to initiate intergovernmental negotiations. Your guidance, Mr. President, and your leadership immediately following this debate are needed in two ways. First of all, we need a format for negotiations. We all know that this cannot be done in the Open-ended Working Group. Intergovernmental negotiations need a more efficient forum if we want to see results soon. And we need a tool for negotiations. This tool, a proposal for a consolidated text, should be elaborated on the basis of progress achieved so far. This text will, at this stage, not be a draft resolution but rather a text outlining a result in a clearer way than the facilitators' reports during the sixty-first session. There should also be a precise road map for the negotiations and a time frame within which to finish the negotiations, with a result to be achieved during the sixty-second session.

Secondly, on substance, we still believe that the Group of Four proposal would be the best way forward. However, as we have mentioned, we are open-minded and we do not rule out a two-step or intermediary approach. However, the following considerations should be kept in mind. If an intermediary approach is to be considered, it must bring about real change. We cannot simply settle for the lowest common denominator. We must create a formula for a Council that will reflect today's political realities and that will truly change the balance of power in the Council right from the start of the intermediary period. Otherwise political frustration in many parts of the world will further increase over time, and we will thus have failed to meet the very objective of the reform.

A mandatory review must be an integral part of the solution. The option for a more comprehensive reform and a review of the first reform drive must not remain a vague promise. Any solution we envisage must contain a mandatory review within a clear time frame and a clearly defined mandate.

The decision will possibly have to be made by a vote, which, according to the United Nations Charter, will have to be by a two-thirds majority. The aim is a more legitimate Council. What we want is not just a larger Council. What we want is a different Council, one that will be more legitimate, more transparent, more representative, more effective and more reflective of today's political realities. It is not enough to add more two-year seats or to take similar half-measures.

We urge Members to join us in showing flexibility, thus paving the way for results-oriented negotiations. It is high time for us to get down to work, start negotiations and produce clear-cut results.

Mr. Lacroix (France) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first of all to thank you, Sir, on behalf of my delegation and to thank also the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, Ambassador Natalegawa, for the report he presented to us on behalf of the Security Council (A/62/2).

We would also thank you, Mr. President, for having us meet today to discuss this very basic issue, namely, the reform of the Security Council. It is our hope that the debate will enable us to move ahead together towards defining the framework of negotiations that should lead us to a bold reform of the Security Council. You have made this one of the priorities for your term of office, which you recently confirmed in your letter of 8 November. I would assure you of the French delegation's full support.

France's commitment here has been and remains unswerving. As the President of the French Republic said in the General Assembly on 25 September,

> "in this world where the fate of each of us depends on the fate of others, the United Nations should not be weakened; the United Nations must be strengthened. Reforming the United Nations so as to adapt it to the realities of our world is an absolute priority for France. We cannot afford to wait any longer". (*A/62/PV.4, p. 2*)

It goes without saying that we must mobilize to strengthen the central institution of the United Nations — the Security Council — in the areas of peace and security. How can we move ahead after so many years of discussion? First of all, we must remember that the necessary expansion of the Council must be geared towards strengthening its authority and its effectiveness. That is why we favour increasing the membership in both categories, with new permanent members Germany, Japan, India, Brazil, and fair representation for Africa.

And then we have to acknowledge the recent work done by the General Assembly. The decision we took on 17 September called for us to achieve concrete results on the basis of progress made, particularly at the Assembly's sixty-first session. We believe that the report of the Working Group is useful in that it offers a balanced account of the current state of affairs, and we should draw inspiration from that.

If we want to have the Security Council evolve in a direction that is more reflective of the realities of the world today, then we must all show flexibility and creativity with respect to the modalities of the reform. France is ready for that. We are open to an intermediate approach that, without prejudging the final outcome, would enable us to move forward.

The time has come to start negotiating. How? Here again we are ready to examine any appropriate modalities in a practical manner. We count on you, Mr. President, to set forth the next stage for our work, in close consultation with the States most concerned. There is little time left because reform is more essential now than ever before, and we must therefore actively continue our efforts.

In conclusion, may I simply confirm that France is ready to do this work in a spirit of openness and with a firm determination to succeed.

Mr. Tarragô (Brazil): Mr. President, thank you for convening this timely debate. The reform of the Security Council relates to the foundations of this Organization and, therefore, to the international order. In the consideration of the reform of the Council, including the improvement of its working methods, the legitimacy and effectiveness of our collective decisions on matters pertaining to international peace and security are at stake.

As mentioned in the report of the Security Council now under consideration (A/62/2), and consistent with past trends, the volume and scope of issues before that body increased in the period from August 2006 to July 2007. However, outdated institutional structures impair the capacity of the Council to face the challenges posed by such an expanding and increasingly complex agenda. To succeed, we need a Security Council that is more representative of the membership and fully reflective of contemporary international realities. With greater representation and political realism will come enhanced legitimacy and effectiveness.

Those are the fundamental considerations at the heart of Brazil's position on Security Council reform. Like the overwhelming majority of members of this Assembly, we favour the increase in the number of both permanent and non-permanent seats, and a greater representation of the developing countries, which are able to contribute to the reinforcement of peace and security. We also support the improvement of the Council's working methods.

These are the ultimate goals that Brazil, with like-minded countries, will pursue in the intergovernmental negotiations mandated by decision 61/561, adopted September. Brazil is ready to engage in negotiations with flexibility, in a spirit of understanding. I am confident that all delegations will display the same attitude.

We view the September decision as an invaluable opportunity to change a status quo that Member States have proclaimed to be unacceptable, a historical opportunity we cannot miss. It follows 14 years of extensive discussions in the Open-ended Working Group, which has reached its limits in producing the required reform. We should move ahead and not continue endlessly with the same procedures. We need to establish substantive negotiating dynamics capable of delivering concrete results that lead to a meaningful reform of the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter.

This will only be possible if the appropriate setting for the negotiation is put in place in a timely manner. The process should start without delay, preferably in this month of November, and proceed steadily so that it can be successfully concluded in the present session of the General Assembly. Time is of the essence. The longer we delay the reform, the wider the gap between the Council's outdated structure and today's political imperatives. Gradualism has been draining our energies for 14 years and, as such, has only served those who do not want a meaningful reform of the Security Council.

We trust you, Sir, to lead us. We are persuaded that, guided by the relevant provisions of the September decision, you will organize the negotiating process so that it will allow all to participate in an inclusive, transparent and result-oriented mode. You will certainly have in mind paragraph (d) of the decision that I have just mentioned, wherein clear instructions have been given regarding our future work, which must be based on concrete elements. The General Assembly has chosen to pursue the negotiations, building on the progress achieved and the positions and proposals of Member States. Incidentally, a number of proposals have been presented to the Assembly, and facilitators have contributed to this process after extensive consultations, which we must recognize.

One possible practical manner to move forward could be to determine, in an objective and transparent way, the substantive elements of the Security Council reform that garner the broadest support in this Assembly. In any event, we believe that all delegations agree to have a Member-driven process.

The day-to-day management of the negotiating process is also a matter that you, Mr. President, will judge how best to handle. My delegation, for one, would be honoured to take part in negotiations held under your direct guidance. However, we would understand if you prefer to appoint a coordinator or facilitator to assist you. In any case, we will rely on your sustained leadership and wisdom.

As all Members agree, without Security Council reform as mandated by our leaders in the 2005 World Summit, the goal of United Nations reform will not be attained. It is our hope and expectation that the negotiations will soon be initiated. Such negotiations should do what our predecessors have tried but never realized. An enlarged and enhanced Security Council will strengthen the United Nations and invigorate multilateralism.

Mr. Mohamad (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to pay tribute to your wise leadership, Mr. President, and to thank you for making Security Council reform a priority during this session.

We also associate ourselves with the important statement made by the representative of Angola on behalf of the African group.

We would like to reconfirm our firm and deep belief in the importance of Security Council reform. Reform should be at the forefront of the agenda for the overall reform of the United Nations, because reforming the Council is key to enabling the United Nations to respond more consciously and effectively to the serious challenges facing the world today and fully discharge its responsibilities in support of multilateralism and the principles of justice, law and equality in international relations.

The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council is an item that has been on the agenda of the Assembly since 1979, and yet no real progress has been made. That can be seen in the rather modest account of what has been achieved to date, despite the importance of the subject and the commitments made by the Presidents and heads of State at the 2005 World Summit for an early reform of the Security Council as an essential element in the overall reform of the United Nations. We therefore do regret the slow pace of the progress achieved thus far, and we hope that there will be a renewal of the political will on the part of Member States, so that we can adopt a coordinated, determined approach and settle this matter by consensus as soon as possible, in service to the common concerns and interests of all.

We have repeatedly and urgently called for an integrated and comprehensive reform of the Security Council so that the Council can reflect realistically the geopolitical developments of the world today and respond to the legitimate aspirations of the people of the third world, especially the developing countries and Africa. We reiterate our firm and full support for the African position as set forth in several African Summit meetings. The Organization's work is negatively impacted by the current composition and working methods of the Security Council, which infringes on the mandates of other bodies, falls short of carrying out its principal mandate — the maintenance of international peace and security — and takes a disturbingly selective approach in deciding which issues are included on its agenda. Thus the Council's structure and working methods must be reformed in order to re-establish the institutional balance among the various organs of the United Nations.

Credibility must be restored to the Council's ability to discharge its mandate in the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with the Charter. The need to truly reform the Council arises from certain tragic developments in various parts of the world, particularly the Middle East. Here, the Security Council acts as a mere spectator, disregarding international law, conscience and legitimacy. We need a new Council that is able to take up the various challenges in accordance with the law and with impartiality, transparency and credibility. That is sadly lacking in the Council today because of a lack of democracy and the presence of a threatening atmosphere. Threats are made by a minority of its members, who manipulate the Council for their own narrow purposes and selfish national interests. The Council has become part of the problems and not a solution to them.

We hope that Member States will successfully accomplish this historically necessary work and we reaffirm our full support for conducting a serious and responsible dialogue that will lead to the desired reform under your wise leadership, Sir. Reform the Security Council now and make this session a turning point so that our children will not repeat 20 years from now what we have said today.

Mr. Majoor (Netherlands): The report of the Security Council (A/62/2), now before us, is a factual account of the Council's work during the period 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007. Two hundred and twenty-four official meetings, 71 resolutions, 52 presidential statements and 47 press statements — the report is full of such facts and figures on the Council's efforts to fulfil its mandate of maintaining international peace and security. Impressive facts, indeed.

But there is another fact that also demands our full attention, not just today, but during this entire Assembly session. That is the fact that there is now a window of opportunity for Security Council reform. The Council is arguably the signature organ of the United Nations. The report on its work over the past year, as presented this morning by the President of the Council, is a clear testament to that. The Council Chamber is the one room where cameras from all over the world regularly roll, the one room where resolutions might bring about the resolution of the conflicts besieging our post-cold war world, and the one room where international order can be forcefully reshaped or restored through joint international action.

Right before us lies an opportunity to further enhance the Council's contribution to international order and to forge a more representative, transparent and effective United Nations and a Security Council better equipped to deal with the insecurities of the twenty-first century. Reforming this centrepiece of the United Nations must necessarily be a centrepiece of United Nations reform.

The need for Security Council reform has long been evident to all partners in this Hall, but it has nevertheless been part of a long and seemingly never-ending debate — I say "seemingly" because last year we finally and fortunately pushed the envelope and forged ahead towards real negotiations. That momentum was generated in large part by the transitional approach spearheaded during that session. It is an approach that offers quite a lot of potential to do something quite unusual, historically speaking, in the reform debate: unite us rather than divide us. For each and every one of us, it offers the opportunity to have our cake and eat it too. We can all have meaningful progress on Council reform, but at the same time we can all keep our original aspirations on the specifics of it. If the Council is to be reformed at some point in the near future, then an intermediary approach is, I believe, the way forward, and this session of the Assembly is the first and probably the only opportunity to do so. So, progress through intergovernmental negotiations is now in the air. After years of wandering around, we finally got to that bridge — and now we must cross it.

At this point, leadership to guide the membership towards the destination of reform is as crucial as it ever was. To be more precise, we need to establish a mechanism that will translate the current momentum into the early start of results-oriented intergovernmental negotiations, building on the progress achieved thus far, particularly at the sixty-first session. The Netherlands has always been a staunch supporter of Security Council reform and will continue to be so, especially at this hour of opportunity.

At outset of this debate, Mr. President, you showed your resolve and your determination to make the most of this opportunity. You have indicated where you stand, and we stand with you.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I would like to thank Ambassador Marty Natalegawa of Indonesia, President of the Security Council, for presenting the Council's annual report (A/62/2) to the General Assembly.

This joint debate is an important opportunity for the membership to undertake a strategic review of the work of the Security Council and of our collective efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Council. The Council acts on behalf of the entire membership as the primary organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. The General Assembly must assess whether the Council was effective in maintaining international peace and security: did it reflect the views and interests of all Member States? Did it act in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter?

Paradoxically, while some believe that the Security Council is the only United Nations organ that performs, there is also widespread dissatisfaction about its work and decisions. Transparency and openness could help to ease some of that dissatisfaction. Unfortunately, the Security Council's annual report, while providing a good statistical record, fails to offer sufficient information or analysis, particularly with regard to its decision-making process. Decisions are evolved mostly in closed-door sessions, if not behind the scenes by a few key States. The Council has not responded to the call for special reports on important issues. Nor is there a consistent effort to maintain institutional interaction with the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council, for example, through regular briefings by the Security Council presidency to the President of the General Assembly.

The Security Council has been most effective, in recent years, in addressing internal crises and conflicts, mostly in Africa, and considerably less effective in resolving threats to and breaches of international peace and security, which is its primary mandate.

Peacekeeping has been utilized to good effect in several complex crises, from Sierra Leone to Liberia, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and Timor-Leste. Still, other situations, most notably Somalia, have been grossly neglected for years. However, much more needs to be done to prevent conflicts from erupting in the first place and to prevent relapse once a situation has been stabilized. In that regard, it is important to address the underlying causes of conflict and pursue more proactively a comprehensive approach focusing on post-conflict peacebuilding and development. The Council's actions must be conducted with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States concerned.

As regards inter-State conflicts, the Security Council's record has been most unimpressive. Major unresolved issues, including in our own region, remain asleep on the agenda of the Council. Even in the case of some important issues on the active agenda, particularly the Middle East, the Council's role has been sidelined. It does not deal directly with some of the other major conflicts and threats to international peace and security.

We have witnessed inaction and delay even in the face of the most obvious acts of aggression and breaches of peace. We have witnessed double standards and selectivity; threats and the use of force and other forms of coercion; non-implementation of certain Council resolutions; and non-transparent, non-inclusive, partial and partisan decisions by the Council. That is where we have the starkest realization of the influence and control of some permanent members and other major Powers, which, in small and secretive conclaves, make decisions that primarily reflect their interests and that are often inconsistent with the priorities and aspirations of the vast majority of United Nations Member States. It is therefore not surprising that, despite the revival of a greater number of public meetings of the Council, there has been little tangible improvement in transparency and understanding of the decision-making process of the Council.

Those are the issues around which revolves the other aspect of our debate today, that is, the reform of the Security Council. The stated objectives of reform are to make the Council more representative, transparent, accountable and effective, thus enhancing its legitimacy and credibility. The central and crucial question is whether we can achieve those objectives by enlarging the coterie of the powerful few, or by strengthening democratic representation, role and influence of the general membership of the United Nations in the Security Council. We believe the latter is the right and only feasible approach.

That belief is the basis for our principled opposition to any increase in the number of permanent members of the Security Council. Indeed, most of the dissatisfaction with the Council can be attributed to the existence and role of the permanent members. We are therefore totally unconvinced by the argument that this dissatisfaction, and the consequent erosion in the Council's credibility, will be resolved by adding more permanent members. On the contrary, the problems will be compounded by increasing the number of permanent members, each one of which will seek to ensure the protection of its own national interests in the work of the Council. Indeed, that would lead to a complete paralysis in the performance of the Council.

Permanent membership for a few individual States will deny the opportunity for equitable representation to the rest of us. Only an acceptable formula with an increase in non-permanent members and rotation can provide the means for such equitable representation for all States. Such rotation, combined with regional representation, may also offer possibilities for a fuller representation of countries members of various groups of States. That could better reflect the complex current realities. Those realities consist of a few large Powers; a number of medium-sized States; a majority of smaller States; and the emergence of regional organizations, which are playing important roles in international and regional peace and security.

The position of the Uniting for Consensus group is flexible and realistic. It allows variable arrangements and different possibilities and options, including rotation and longer-term presence, through re-election, and providing a greater relevance to regional representation. Such arrangements can also accommodate the interests of sub-regions such as the Arab Group, the Caribbean Community and Central America, and political groups, such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which has legitimate political and regional interests to promote and defend in the Council. The Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held in Islamabad a few months ago, reiterated the demand for adequate representation of the Islamic umma in any category of expansion in the Security Council.

Since, under any proposed scheme for Council expansion, new seats will be allocated to the regions, the countries of those regions should be able to determine the nature of representation of those seats. It is not for one or more major Powers to determine such representation. Furthermore, equitable geographical distribution, envisaged in Article 23 of the Charter, would make little sense if a seat allocated to a region were to be occupied permanently by one country.

That is why we respect and understand Africa's position. Africa's demand for permanent seats is for the entire region and is therefore different from other proposals that seek permanent membership for individual States. As we understand it, against the two empowered seats that are sought by Africa, representation on the Council could be from two or, through rotation, a larger number of African States, under arrangements to be made by Africa itself. Africa would thus retain the power to ensure accountability on the part of those States that would represent it and act on its behalf in the Council. The African model of regional representation, if it is applied to all regions, appears to be an approach that may help to evolve agreement on Council reform. Using the African model, other regions could also be enabled to decide their own arrangements for representation of their respective regions on the Council.

We are all aware of the history of this reform debate. The positions of Member States and major interested groups on various aspects of Security Council reform are well known. All support the objective of a comprehensive reform. Our leaders committed themselves to that objective at the Millennium Summit and at the 2005 World Summit. However, major differences have persisted on the nature and the modalities of achieving reform.

After years of impasse, there was a positive movement last year. The Uniting for Consensus members took the lead, launching the call for a negotiated solution, at a high-level open meeting in New York co-hosted by the President of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of Italy on 20 September 2006. The subsequent process, led by Assembly President Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, assisted by several facilitators, led to presentation of two reports based on wide consultations with the entire membership (see A/61/47). I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ms. Al-Khalifa and her facilitators for their important and sincere contribution.

The facilitators' reports concluded that: first, none of the past proposals had the required support; secondly, in order to be implementable, any reform formula must garner the widest possible political acceptance of the membership, in any case well above the required two-thirds majority; and thirdly, a compromise intermediate approach was the only feasible option. The reports were generally welcomed and appreciated as constituting significant progress on the reform issue. The Secretary-General, in his report on the work of the Organization (A/62/1), also noted the main recommendation of the facilitators that Member States consider an intermediary approach as a compromise solution with a view to unblocking the process.

To achieve further progress, we must build upon the progress achieved so far, particularly in the sixty-first session, as reflected in the reports of the facilitators. That was decided by the Assembly on the recommendation of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. It was also decided that the Working Group should continue efforts during the sixty-second session aimed at achieving general agreement among Member States in the consideration of all issues relevant to Security Council reform. Those are the parameters of the framework for the next steps in this reform process.

The difficulties faced in adopting the report of the Open-ended Working Group (A/61/47) last year illustrated how divisive this issue can become. The positive dynamic and the progress achieved through the facilitators' process were almost derailed by the unilateral draft resolution submitted by some States. That move gathered weak support, and the report was eventually adopted by consensus. However, that unilateral and partisan move eroded confidence and trust in the process. We will need to rebuild that confidence and mutual trust. We are therefore disturbed that professions of flexibility heard here are accompanied by the reiteration of demands that are clearly unacceptable and by assertions that the decisions on this issue will be taken by a vote.

Uniting for Consensus believes that the reform issue can only be advanced through an approach based on consensus-building and garnering the widest possible support of the Member States, with regard to both substance and process. We support negotiations. Indeed, the Uniting for Consensus group was the first to call for negotiations. However, negotiations are meant to lead to agreement, not to a vote.

To ensure a successful outcome, negotiations must be carefully planned and prepared. In the first place, there must be clarity and agreement on the basis, parameters, framework and conditions for negotiations. That should include confidence-building measures to prevent unilateral moves and pre-emptive initiatives that could disrupt the process. Based on the recommendations agreed at the last session of the Assembly, the following four elements should serve as the parameters for intergovernmental negotiations envisaged by the General Assembly.

First, the discussions and negotiations should take place within the framework of the Open-ended Working Group. That is the established mechanism. We do not favour — and indeed, we will oppose — restricted conclaves from which the vast majority of Member States would be excluded.

Secondly, the aim should be to build on the progress achieved at the sixty-first session, that is, the two reports of the facilitators, which recommend exploration of an intermediary approach. Submission of unilateral proposals will not advance — indeed could retard — the process.

Thirdly, the objective must be to achieve general agreement, as decided by the Assembly, that is, to reach a compromise, as recommended by the Open-ended Working Group and endorsed by the Assembly. Any process which envisages a vote will be contrary to the objective of reaching general agreement.

Fourthly, there must be commitment against any unilateral or pre-emptive move, such as the submission of draft resolutions or proposals and calls for a vote by any side while the process is under way, at least for the duration of the sixty-second session of the Assembly.

We believe that you, Sir, as President of the Assembly, should hold informal consultations to determine the conditions and framework for negotiations. As has been the practice in the past, you could appoint one or more vice-chairs of the Open-ended Working Group to assist you in the process. But we would urge you to strongly discourage the culture of putting forward draft resolutions and of threats of voting as a means of achieving what needs to be discussed and agreed in negotiations. There can be no discussions and negotiations in an environment of threat, coercion and pressure.

Uniting for Consensus is keen to build on the progress so painstakingly achieved during the previous session. Artificial deadlines, however, will surely divide us once again. We are confident that under your guidance, Sir, we will be able to carry forward our work in an atmosphere of trust and mutual confidence to achieve a compromise negotiated solution through the broadest possible agreement of Member States. We are ready and willing to work with you for the achievement of that objective.

Mr. McNee (Canada): Canada welcomes this opportunity to share views on the annual report of the Security Council (A/62/2) and to return to the important subject of Security Council reform.

The report of the Security Council makes plain that the complexity, variety and volume of Council business continues to expand at a dramatic pace. With more than 90,000 military, police and civilians deployed in peace support missions worldwide, the United Nations is making a vital contribution to the reduction of armed conflict and the promotion of sustainable peace and development around the world, not least through the oversight of elections and support for the peaceful consolidation of civilian governmental authority in States as varied as Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and Afghanistan.

Working in cooperation with regional organizations, the United Nations has made great strides in making peace operations a more effective international tool for saving lives, assisting democratic transformation and creating a conducive environment for economic recovery. We are deeply indebted to the Council, the Secretariat and above all the peacekeepers and all those who serve the United Nations in the field for their tireless efforts.

However, despite the progress made so far, the Council's report leaves no room for doubt that, for far too many people in this world, the dream of a life of peace remains unfulfilled.

The importance of the decisions of the Security Council to the daily lives of millions of people around the world underscores the genuine urgency of reforming the Council to ensure it is more representative, more effective, more transparent and more accountable. Comprehensive Security Council reform remains a critical unfinished piece of business within our larger United Nations reform efforts and merits renewed consideration during this session of the Assembly.

Canada believes that the Council's legitimacy would be enhanced by increasing its membership to include a broader representation of the world's regions. My delegation understands the wish of some Member States to have regular access to Security Council membership, and for this reason we are open to the consideration of elected renewable terms in the context of negotiations on enlargement.

However, we take the view that those negotiations must also result in significant participation of middle Powers and smaller States, which have an equal — if not greater — stake in the success of the multilateral security system, and whose contributions should not be taken for granted.

While Canada supports the objective of Security Council expansion, it must be secured in a manner consistent with the fundamental principles of fairness, democracy, accountability and flexibility. Otherwise it will not enhance, but rather diminish, the authority of the Council. For those reasons, it is important that agreement on Security Council expansion be achieved through negotiations. Any changes made have the clear support of a very broad consensus based on a wide cross-section of Member States. Putting such a fundamental issue to a vote would only prove highly divisive.

Canada continues to believe that it is not in the best interests of the institution itself to add new permanent members to the Council. That is based on the view that the discipline of regular elections is the essential mechanism for ensuring Council accountability before the Assembly and on the conviction that there are ways of making the Council more representative, such as expanding the non-permanent category of membership, without conferring special rights, in perpetuity, on a privileged few.

While the question of Security Council composition has dominated the debate on Council reform in recent years, it is clear that the legitimacy of the Council depends not only, or even primarily, on its composition but rather on its effectiveness. In other words, it is not just about who takes the decisions but, most important, about the quality and timeliness of those decisions.

For that reason, Canada believes that Council effectiveness should be at the centre of the debate. We see two key areas where the need for change is particularly urgent and where the potential for progress is well within our collective grasp. First, the Security Council's working methods should be improved to increase accountability, inclusivity and transparency, to promote evidence-based decision-making and to limit the use of the veto. Secondly, the Security Council's normative framework should be updated, so that it is better equipped to meet the demands of the changing security environment of the twenty-first century.

Thanks to organizations such as Security Council Report and the dedication of a number of Council members, particularly the elected members — I recall, in particular, Japan's work while recently on the Council — the Council is a more transparent body today than at any other point in its history. But at a time when the Council's work has increasingly far-reaching implications for all Member States in areas such as counter-terrorism and non-proliferation, Canada believes more could, and should, be done.

First, we urge the Council to redouble its efforts to enhance consultation with the broader membership, for example by making more frequent and systematic use of informal exchanges and by increasing the regularity of substantive briefings for Member States, including on the work of subsidiary bodies.

Secondly, we encourage the Council to expand and deepen the practice of public and open debates, which allow the broad membership to contribute their perspectives and ideas to the Council's consideration of the international peace and security agenda.

Thirdly, where States have capacity challenges in meeting Council obligations, such as in counter-terrorism, we would encourage the Council to identify opportunities for, and facilitate the furnishing of, greater technical assistance.

Fourthly, there is an acute need for better and more publicly available information to assist in Council decision-making. In that regard, my delegation strongly supports efforts to provide better aggregate data to the Council, for example on trends in global conflict, civilian protection and humanitarian access, in order to facilitate evidence-based decision-making.

Fifthly, the Council would also benefit from a serious consideration of the use of the veto. We all know the inhibiting effect that the veto — or even the threat of the veto — can have on Council deliberations. There have been several regrettable occasions in recent years when the spectre of the veto had the effect of dampening debate and delaying much-needed action. In our view, the veto can rarely be justified. It is not, and was never meant to be, a tool for avoiding debate on certain issues. For that reason, Canada believes that any use of the veto should be publicly explained and justified.

We also strongly believe that the veto has no place in deliberations on situations of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, and we urge the five permanent members to commit themselves to voluntarily restrict its use in those situations, which shock the conscience of humanity.

For the vast majority of Member States, it is those reforms that, in the first instance, would pay the greatest dividends in terms of access to and accountability of the Security Council. Canada believes that those and other changes to the Council's working methods could significantly enhance its effectiveness and, in so doing, its legitimacy. We encourage the Council to consider adopting such measures in the months ahead.

In the meantime, allow me to reiterate my Government's strong support for the draft resolution on working methods circulated by Singapore, Liechtenstein, Costa Rica, Switzerland and Jordan. We believe that the draft resolution merits serious consideration by Assembly and Security Council members alike and encourage the drafters to initiate broad-based consultations as soon as possible.

(*spoke in French*)

The second area that Canada believes should be studied as soon as possible is the normative framework within which the Security Council takes its decisions. One typical example is the issue of the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Canada believes that it is important to strengthen the protection of civilians and the related norms and to operationalize those norms so that the international community can continue to put those principles into practice.

The Council has demonstrated that real progress can be made. But real efforts must also still be made. The protection of civilians means that the Council must be permanently committed, and must be vigilant in monitoring and following up those cases in which resolutions have laid out clear instructions on that point.

Agenda items on women and peace and security and on children and armed conflict, to which the Council has committed itself, also require systematic attention, implementation and institutionalization. It is important that the Council be able to demonstrate political will and the capacity necessary to make use of whole range of tools available to it in achieving that goal, in particular by using effective monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

In conclusion, Member States have dedicated a lot of time and energy to the question of the composition of the Security Council over the past few years, and they were right to do so. At the sixty-first session of the Assembly, the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council made good progress. In the coming months, we should make use of the two reports of the facilitators (see A/61/47, annexes II and IV), bearing in mind the goals of representativity, democracy and accountability, transparency and effectiveness.

But if Members are unable to reach an agreement in the near future on the enlargement of the Council, then let us nevertheless move ahead in areas, such as norms and working methods, where we believe that taking measures quickly could achieve concrete results for Member States. My delegation stands ready to deal with those crucial issues with renewed flexibility and energy in the coming months.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.

United Nations A/62/PV.49

General Assembly
Sixty-second session

Official Records

49th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 13 November 2007, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kerim . . . . (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 9 and 122 (continued)

Report of the Security Council (A/62/2)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Mr. Christian (Ghana): I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the President of the Security Council for this month, Ambassador Natalegawa, Permanent Representative of Indonesia, for his introduction yesterday morning of the annual report of the Security Council for the period 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007 (A/62/2).

Ghana associates itself with the statement delivered yesterday afternoon by the representative of Angola, on behalf of the African Group, on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council.

During the period under review, the Council's programme of work covered various issues relating to the maintenance of international peace and security, including threats to peace and security, conflicts, peacekeeping operations and post-conflict peacebuilding. The breadth and depth of the problems that had to be dealt with kept the Council busy throughout the year. As stated in the report, the Council met in 224 formal meetings, of which 184 were public, in addition to 22 meetings with troop-contributing countries. It also held 192 consultations of the whole, adopted 71 resolutions and 52 presidential statements, and issued 47 statements to the press.

We welcome the Council's growing engagement and cooperation with the African Union (AU) in all aspects of peacekeeping. That cooperation is now widely acknowledged to be essential in resolving effectively the remaining conflicts on the African continent. In that connection, the visit undertaken by the Security Council in June 2007 to a number of African countries was very significant.

The extensive and fruitful discussions held with key AU personalities — including the current Chairman, President J. A. Kufuor of Ghana, and the Chairperson of the AU Commission, President Alpha Oumar Konaré — were cemented with an agreement for the two bodies to meet yearly. Additionally, the Council is to explore how the United Nations could further assist the AU in its peacekeeping efforts, particularly when it is acting under the Council's mandate.

We commend the Secretary-General for his efforts to resolve the Darfur crisis as well as to ensure that the Comprehensive Peace Agreement is thoroughly and effectively implemented. The unanimous adoption of Security Council resolution 1769 (2007), authorizing the establishment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, was an important development in the peace process and reflects a solid consensus between the AU and United Nations on the way forward.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

The situations in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Burundi were also continuously reviewed by the Council. We remain hopeful that the international community will continue to assist those sister African countries in the arduous task of consolidating their hard-won peace.

On the other hand, Somalia remains in turmoil, as the President of the Council rightly stated. The scale of violence, including factional fighting and the activities of extremist groups, continues to take a heavy toll on the civilian population, and there seems to be no end in sight to the bloodshed and misery. In spite of its courageous efforts, the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) is severely handicapped by inadequate funding and logistics, which have prevented it from deploying to its full capacity.

We reiterate our full support for the Council's call for a broad and inclusive political process in Somalia, as well as for international assistance to the AU, in order to pave the way for the transformation of AMISOM into a United Nations peacekeeping operation.

We commend the Congolese delegation, Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, for its initiative in preparing a working paper for a seminar, scheduled for December 2007, based on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1625 (2005). The recommendations that will emerge from the seminar should provide the basis for enhancing coordination and coherence among stakeholders.

We also applaud the Council for dealing with country-specific issues as well as holding thematic debates, since both types of debate are necessary for the execution of the Council's mandate. The thematic debates provide occasions for in-depth consideration of topical issues relating to the maintenance of peace and security. It also gives non-members of the Council the opportunity to participate in those important meetings.

The Council's missions to Afghanistan, Kosovo, Côte d'Ivoire and the Democratic Republic of the Congo afforded members an opportunity to assess on-the-spot factors militating against the resolution of the crises and problems of those countries. The missions undoubtedly enhanced the knowledge and understanding of Council members and led to their better appreciation of the situations in those countries.

The Council continued its monthly consideration of the situation in the Middle East and the Palestinian question. It also discussed the question of Lebanon, the implementation of resolutions 1701 (2006) and 1559 (2004), the International Independent Investigation Commission and the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. We believe that the Council should persist in its efforts to find a peaceful and lasting solution to the Middle East problem in all its aspects. We share the view that the current situation in the region poses a great threat to international peace and security.

We acknowledge the Council's commitment to the fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Three of its subsidiary bodies — the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999), concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban; the Counter-Terrorism Committee, established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001); and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), on weapons of mass destruction and terrorism — have kept the Council well informed of their activities and have been transparent; they offer a good example to other subsidiary bodies of the Council.

My delegation reiterates the need to enhance the credibility of the Council through substantive reform guided by the principles of democracy, the sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical representation.

A reformed Security Council should be transparent in its activities and more responsive to the interests of the general membership in matters deriving from its mandate under the Charter, the more so given that all Member States of the United Nations are called upon — indeed, are obliged — to share the burden of the maintenance of international peace and security through, inter alia, assessed contributions to the peacekeeping budget, the provision of troops for United Nations peacekeeping missions and the implementation of resolutions adopted by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the Charter.

Against that background, Ghana renews its support for the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, and reiterates Africa's request for two permanent seats on the Security Council, with all the privileges of permanent membership, in addition to five non-permanent seats. Africa, the largest regional group in the Organization, is, paradoxically, the only region excluded from the category of permanent membership.

We commend the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council for its work during the previous session, and welcome the General Assembly's decision to continue to address the question of reform during its sixty-second session.

Finally, I congratulate the five new non-permanent members of the Security Council — Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Croatia, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Viet Nam — on their election. I am confident that the new members will work for a more transparent Security Council, in line with the general reform of the United Nations, in order to make it more effective in meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Mr. Hackett (Barbados): At the outset, I thank Ambassador Natalegawa, Permanent Representative of Indonesia and current President of the Security Council, for his detailed introduction, yesterday morning, of the report of the Security Council (A/62/2).

The report is largely factual, and not as analytical as many delegations have been requesting. I nevertheless commend the members of the Council for the work they have undertaken during the reporting period, and express the hope that one aspect of the reform of the Council will be a change in the format of the report to make it more analytical and lend itself to a more interactive discussion between the Council and members of the General Assembly on its work.

Although the work of the Council encompassed all regions of the world, once again the focus was largely on African issues. My delegation thanks the members of the Council for all their efforts in seeking to bring peace and stability where there is conflict in the African region. Given the strong interrelationship between peace, security and development, we believe that peace and sustained stability constitute an essential platform — a precondition, if you will — for further and sustained development progress in the countries of Africa.

Barbados also welcomes the attention that the Council has paid to the situation in Haiti and the support provided to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

My delegation would also like to make a number of points about agenda item 122, on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. We commend the efforts of the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, and her facilitators in guiding the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council over the past session, as well as for the work they have undertaken and the recommendations that they have presented to us.

The increasing intensity of the pace of activities and the volume and scope of the issues that come before the Council are further compelling arguments that reform of that major body of the Organization is urgently needed. The world is not the same as when the Organization was created, 62 years ago. We now have an Organization of 192 Member States with varying levels of political and economic development and differing priority interests.

The changing face of our world requires changes in the United Nations, that most important multilateral body that seeks to respond to the varied global problems and challenges in the interest of all Member States. That is true, we believe, for all three pillars of activity of the United Nations: development, peace and security, and human rights. On the development side, we have seen some initial reform, with the revitalization of the Economic and Social Council. On human rights, we have had the creation of the Human Rights Council.

However, there has been no change in the structure and functioning of the Security Council, the principal organ of the United Nations that seeks to promote international peace and security and was the subject of the broad United Nations reform agenda that emanated from the 2005 World Summit. Indeed, in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) world leaders resolved to support early reform of the Security Council in order to make it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent, and enhance its effectiveness and legitimacy.

Barbados was a sponsor of draft resolution A/61/L.69/Rev.1 because we believed that, after 14 years of informal discussions and consultations on the issue of Security Council reform, and with the mandate from the 2005 United Nations Summit, it was time for intergovernmental negotiations to begin. We further believe that the consultations to date have provided a number of useful ideas that can be the basis for those consultations.

In that regard, Barbados believes that a reformed Security Council should have an increase in membership in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. We further believe that additional permanent members should come from both the developed and developing worlds, and that the arrangements for the increase in the number of non-permanent members should allow for greater representation from small States and island States.

The use of the veto should be limited, with a move towards its eventual abolition. A review mechanism after a reasonable period of time — we suggest about 15 years — will also be essential.

Achieving success in those negotiations will require a strong commitment by all Member States. You, Mr. President, should determine, through an objective and transparent process, the elements that command the widest support, so that they can serve as the basis for those intergovernmental negotiations.

Together, we should seek to create a reformed organ with an expanded membership that better reflects contemporary world realities, an organ that possesses a set of working methods that are formalized, clear and transparent, and provide for greater accessibility to its work by non-members. That, we believe, will help to increase the legitimacy of the Security Council and make it a more effective body that is responsive to the views and needs of all Member States.

In conclusion, let me thank you, Mr. President, for your commitment to the reform of the Council. We look forward to your starting the intergovernmental negotiations in the very near future, as requested in the draft resolution to which I referred, and to your taking a leading role in the process — all with a view to a successful conclusion during the sixty-second session.

Mr. Wolfe (Jamaica): The Jamaican delegation welcomes another opportunity to participate in a debate on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. This is an important opportunity to build on the momentum generated earlier this year during the sixty-first session towards meaningful progress on the contentious issue of Security Council reform.

My delegation also acknowledges, with deep appreciation, the efforts made by the President of the Assembly at its sixty-first session, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa of Bahrain, who, in a committed, dedicated and transparent manner, successfully built on the work of her predecessor in putting reform of the Security Council at the top of the Assembly's agenda. Let me repeat again Jamaica's commitment to working together to build upon the momentum under the previous presidency towards meaningful progress on the very contentious and rarely debated issue of Security Council reform.

The Jamaican delegation reiterates its position with regard to the reform of the Security Council. As I have had occasion to state previously, it has been recognized and generally acknowledged that the initial positions of many groups and some individual States on the reform of the Security Council are not attainable.

The situation as it now stands, in my delegation's estimation, is that all States need to show greater flexibility in order to curtail the continuous cycle of consultations and routine placement of the issue on successive agendas of the General Assembly that has characterized the debate on the reform of the Security Council over the past 10 to 14 years. The process needs to be advanced towards meaningful intergovernmental negotiations. We therefore welcome the strides made in that regard in the just-concluded sixty-first session.

Jamaica supports the notion that any solution or formula found must have the support of more than just a majority of States; it must be able to attract the widest possible acceptance by Members of the United Nations, namely, support by the required two thirds majority of the General Assembly, including, obviously, ratification by the permanent Five, as stipulated by Article 108 of the Charter.

Such a solution must also address the question of access, on two counts: first, increased opportunity to serve on the Council, including representation by developing countries; and, secondly, involvement outside it. In that regard, its working methods need to be urgently and comprehensively overhauled as well.

While we may not achieve consensus on all the broad elements, we must necessarily be cautious in proceeding with a partial approach that does not seek to address the most glaring inequities in the structure and operations of the Council. We are naturally concerned that the transitional arrangement now proposed seeks to proceed along a path of expansion of the non-permanent seats only, and that a decision on the creation of new permanent seats would have to be deferred until a later stage. In essence, this proposal seems to be adopting one option over another, and fails to take into account the support by a vast majority of States for expansion in both categories.

Additionally, the proposal for the creation of new non-permanent seats as well as an intermediate category requires, in the view of the Jamaican delegation, the most careful and cautious examination. In this regard, there are serious issues arising which require clarification, such as who would be eligible, for what duration and what would be the implication as regards the crowding out and overshadowing of other members in the non-permanent category.

We should also keep at the forefront of our minds that amendments to the Charter are not everyday occurrences, and that proposed amendments would have to proceed on the basis of the broadest agreement among Member States, including members of the permanent five. Proposed amendments as envisaged under Article 108 of the Charter should therefore not be interim, but should be of a long-term duration.

There are other contentious issues, such as the veto. The vast majority of Member States agree that the veto is anachronistic, obsolete and undemocratic, and should therefore be abolished. Until such time, we could agree to the other more readily achievable steps, such as ways of enhancing accountability for its use, limitations of the scope of its application, and individual or collective pledges to refrain from its use in certain instances. The permanent five, in our view, should be encouraged to support reform in all its aspects.

We do not see much difficulty in reaching agreement on expansion in terms of the additional number of seats. Jamaica could agree to one or two options that were suggested in the sixty-first session, while paying due regard to reconciling concerns to make sure that the Council is both efficient and representative. However, we must emphasize that this approach should ensure expansion in both categories.

Working methods should go hand in hand with the broad reform of the Council. However, as we wait on full reform, action could be taken on some of the more egregious deficiencies which impede access for non-members of the Council.

Finally, we all agree that the debate on Security Council reform has gone on for far too long. We are not entirely sanguine that the current process of consultations, or even the negotiations that are currently being called for, will find a way out of the impasse by way of a political consensus. I may add that some of the statements I heard in the Assembly yesterday give me cause for concern.

But there is no question as to the urgent need for the intergovernmental negotiations to be allowed to commence in earnest. It is clear to us that if positive strides are to be made, we, the Member States, will have to find the will and create the necessary resolve to overcome the barriers that have retarded our every move to march forward.

In the absence of consensus, let us resolve and, indeed, summon the political courage, during this sixty-second session, to put to the test a draft resolution that can garner the widest possible support within the General Assembly and reach the required two-thirds majority, as stipulated by Article 108 of the Charter and Rule 83 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly.

Ms. Rodríguez de Ortiz (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is grateful to the representative of Indonesia for presenting the report of the Security Council (A/62/2), on which we wish to make a number of comments.

The report of the Security Council continues to be merely descriptive, a chronological compendium of meetings and documents, and does not enable us to assess the Council's achievements and advances, or the difficulties that it faces in its work. We reiterate the need for the Council to present a broader and more analytical report enabling us to understand how it dealt with the various items on its agenda, as well as to see the views expressed by Member States, the way in which decisions were taken, or why specific matters were not considered.

As the report indicates, the Council worked at an intense pace, with an increase in the volume and scope of the questions before it. Matters relating to Africa again occupied a prominent place in its programme of work, as did the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine. The fight against terrorism also continued to be among its highest priorities.

Questions of peace and security are interdependent and inseparable from those of development. Venezuela is convinced that the United Nations must address the issue of conflicts in Africa in an integrated and coordinated fashion, taking into account not simply the security dimension, but also economic and social variables. International cooperation to tackle the economic and social problems of African countries should be sustained and unconditional, so that each State may set its priorities and so that the activities of the various authorities can yield positive results for the benefit of their citizens.

Peacekeeping operations are a valuable means whereby the United Nations assists in resolving international conflicts, but they all need to comply with the principles of consent among the parties involved in conflict, impartiality in executing mandates and the use of force solely in self-defence. Peacekeeping operations should be conducted strictly in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter, including unrestricted respect for State sovereignty, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and the self-determination of peoples.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela strongly supports the efforts to secure stable and lasting peace in the Middle East and the formula of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders as the best way to achieve the goal of the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, thus enabling the Palestinian people to fully realize its legitimate and inalienable right to self-determination. In this regard, we believe that direct negotiations between the parties are the ideal means for overcoming the situations of violence that constantly affect the region, causing the loss of many innocent lives.

The Venezuelan Government is resolute in categorically condemning terrorism and rejecting any terrorist activity. It has reaffirmed its commitment in all international forums held on the subject of combating this problem effectively. The measures and norms involved in this policy are reflected in the various reports that we have submitted to the relevant committees of the Security Council as part of our commitment to this struggle.

In that regard, we take this opportunity to note once again the extradition request that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has made to the Government of the United States concerning the notorious international terrorist Luis Posada Carriles, currently at large in United States territory. We repeat our request that the Counter-Terrorism Committee consider and verify compliance by the United States with its obligations in the struggle against terrorism pursuant to Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), in the specific case of our request for the extradition of the terrorist Luis Posada Carriles.

Venezuela supports the early reform of the Security Council as an essential part of the United Nations reform process, in order to make it more representative of the international community and current geopolitical realities, thus giving it greater legitimacy and democratic meaning. We again stress the need for comprehensive reform, with expansion of the Council's membership in both categories, elimination of the veto and improvement of its working methods.

We support the idea that countries of the developing world belonging to the regions of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia, respectively, should become permanent members. Such an arrangement would give tangible form to a legitimate aspiration of peoples and countries that have been deprived and marginalized from exercising this responsibility for more than 60 years.

Our delegation believes that bringing new permanent members into the Council to represent the developing world is the right response in order to correct the current imbalances or asymmetries of power within that body. That is perfectly compatible with the general objective of encouraging the establishment of a multipolar system.

We also advocate an increase in the number of non-permanent members, bearing in mind the principle of equitable geographic distribution enshrined in the Charter.

Reform of the Council should not be limited to expansion of its membership; it should also address other aspects, such as its agenda, working methods and decision-making processes. The Council must promote greater participation by non-member States in its work, improve its accountability and enhance the transparency of its work. Closed Council meetings should be kept to the minimum necessary, and there should be more public meetings and open debates so that the opinions of non-member States may be heard. Open debates should be real opportunities for the opinions and contributions of non-member States to be taken into account.

With regard to the agenda, the Council must avoid addressing issues that could involve usurping the competence of other United Nations bodies; it should concentrate on the problems that really concern threats to international peace and security. Moreover, the Council should invoke Chapter VII of the Charter only as a last resort, and should avoid having recourse to it to tackle issues that do not necessarily involve an immediate threat to international peace and security.

Sanctions are an exceptional measure, important in situations that might jeopardize international peace and security once diplomatic means and negotiations have been exhausted. We are concerned that the Council has sometimes adopted sanctions hastily in situations that do not necessarily represent genuine threats to international peace and security, resorting too soon to the provisions of Articles 41 and 42 of the Charter, before exhausting ways to settle disputes peacefully.

The indiscriminate use of sanctions can have a negative effect on the populations of the countries concerned, affecting their human rights, particularly in the area of health and nutrition, and undermining the physical integrity of women, children and the elderly. Therefore, the Council must avoid this harmful trend.

Venezuela believes that in the process of democratizing the United Nations it is vital to eliminate the right of the veto, because it is an anachronistic mechanism, contrary to the principle of the sovereign equality of States enshrined in the Charter as a fundamental norm governing peaceful coexistence among States. Recourse to it is a symbol of power belonging to a bygone age, and is contrary to multilateralism and the international cooperation that should prevail among Member States. Pending achievement of the ultimate objective of eliminating the right of the veto, ways must be found to limit and reduce its use, including mechanisms whereby the veto could be overridden.

The United Nations cannot continue to travel with a road map based on the past. Reform of the Security Council should be comprehensive. We need to ensure that the values of democracy and transparency govern the Organization's activities.

Our delegation regrets the limited progress made in the discussions of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council. We reaffirm our readiness to continue to participate constructively in the Working Group's deliberations at the sixty-second session, with a view to reaching agreements that will transform the Security Council in a positive manner.

Mr. Álvarez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): With regard to agenda item 9, concerning the report that the Security Council must submit to the General Assembly, we thank the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, President of the Security Council for this month, for introducing document A/62/2.

The report is clearly useful in many ways, in that it gives us an orderly compilation of the documentation issued by the Council in the period under consideration. But it still has some of the characteristics that this delegation has criticized in the past, such as a total lack of analysis of the events and situations reported on, resulting in a content that is almost statistical or bibliographic.

We acknowledge an improvement in the section covering the activities of the Council's subsidiary bodies, and in that connection we highlight progress with regard to sanctions and the procedures for listing and delisting persons and institutions by the competent bodies. While that is limited progress, on the whole it contributes to the transparency required for the effective fulfilment of such a delicate task.

However, we note that there has been no major progress in activities to improve the Council's working methods. Exchanges between the members of the Security Council and members of the General Assembly must be increased, particularly in the consultations on reform of the Council, and on increasing the number of its members, being held in the Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly.

Uruguay reiterates that exchanging information and opinions between States is essential in any reform or improvement of the Council's working methods. Reform would involve, among other important issues, more active participation by troop-contributing countries in the decision-making of the Council on modifying the mandates of operations to which they contribute troops.

As our Foreign Minister stated on 2 October in the general debate (see A/62/PV.14), Uruguay hopes that in the current session we can, on the basis of consensus, advance the process of reforming the Security Council.

Uruguay supports the inclusion of Brazil as a permanent member, as well as India, Germany and Japan, and supports an increase in the number of non-permanent members. However, Uruguay maintains its opposition to extending the veto privilege to new members, whether directly or indirectly, by way of moratoriums or any other type of mechanism that would prolong such an extension. The inequalities generated by the veto privilege will not be corrected by creating new members with that privilege.

This position of principle dates back to the very creation of the Organization, when the delegation of Uruguay maintained that there should be no distinction, in the form of prerogatives or rights, between the Council's members.

Mr. Salam (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): Reviewing the report on the work of the Security Council during the past year is an important occasion. We thank the authors of the objective and clear report and congratulate the Indonesian presidency on its comprehensive introduction of this year's report (A/62/2).

The report notes that the Council held 224 official meetings and 192 consultation meetings, and adopted 71 resolutions, 52 presidential statements and 47 press communiqués. There is no doubt that this increase in the Council's activity during the past year was due to the increasing number of conflicts and crises in various parts of the world, beginning with Africa and continuing through the Middle East, Asia and Europe.

That alone indicates that the Security Council has played a greater role than before. It also indicates the importance of our discussion today on developing the Council's work and reforming the Council in order to enhance its effectiveness, with a view to preserving international peace and security and seeking respect for the principles and provisions of international law.

Lebanon has a long history with the Security Council. In 1978 the Council adopted resolution 425 (1978) in the wake of the first Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon. That was followed by a series of resolutions dealing with the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, calling for the withdrawal of all foreign armies from Lebanon, and affirming its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and support for its legitimate authority. Since 2004, when resolution 1559 (2004) was adopted, Lebanon has been on the Council's agenda in biannual reports which follow the implementation of the resolution.

In 2005, after the crime of the assassination of the former Lebanese Prime Minister, Rafik Hariri, and his companions, the Council responded to the just request from Lebanon to identify the instigators and perpetrators of that terrorist crime and adopted resolution 1595 (2005), by which it established the International Independent Investigation Commission. That was followed by resolutions and statements that dealt responsibly with crimes targeting prominent intellectuals, politicians and free journalists, as well as other intimidation attempts targeting innocent civilians.

In addition, the Council took on the responsibility of the establishment of justice and adopted resolution 1757 (2007), with which it began the process of establishing a Special Tribunal for Lebanon of an international character. That was a clear message to the criminals — wherever and whoever they might be — that they would not enjoy impunity, and with it came the hope that this would serve as a deterrent shield protecting the future of Lebanon and the Lebanese from terrorists and terrorism so that my country, Lebanon, will remain an Arab beacon of democracy and liberty.

Israeli aggression once again targeted Lebanon in July 2006. Over a period of 34 days civilians suffered murder and displacement, and villages and infrastructure were affected by strikes and destruction. Southern Lebanon was sown with millions of cluster bombs, which continue to claim victims, especially children.

The Security Council accordingly unanimously adopted resolution 1701 (2006) on 11 August 2006. Lebanon has committed itself to fully implementing its obligations under the resolution, especially in regard to sending the army to the south, while Israel continues to breach Lebanese sovereignty by land and air, and refuses to hand over maps for mines and cluster bombs left behind, not to mention its failure to withdraw from Lebanese territories.

Lebanon cannot but fully appreciate the important support given by the Security Council to its right and just cause. But, while discussing the effectiveness of the Security Council and how it may better maintain international peace and security, we must point out the risks resulting from the long-overdue implementation — or complete lack of implementation — of numerous resolutions. This affects the credibility of the Council, which is considered in more than one instance to apply a double standard to suit the balance of interests and objectives of major Powers.

Here I remind the Assembly that resolution 425 (1978), providing for Israel's immediate withdrawal from the Lebanese territories, remained dormant for 22 years before it was implemented, in substance, in 2000. In fact, its full implementation still requires Israel's withdrawal from the Shaba Farms and the al-Ghajar village in the south.

In this regard, I also remind the Assembly that 40 years have elapsed since the adoption of resolution 242 (1967), providing for the withdrawal of Israel from all the territories it occupied in 1967; this, while the Palestinian territories and the Syrian Golan remain under occupation.

The question of reforming the Security Council has been on the agenda of the General Assembly since it adopted, in 1993, resolution 48/26. That is nearly 15 years ago. The question of equitable representation on the Council and increase of its membership was already inscribed on the agenda in 1979.

The overwhelming majority of Member States agree on defining the many problems facing the Council and the need to modernize its structures and working methods. But they are not in agreement on effective solutions, especially in regard to the right of the exercise of the veto and the possibility of its restriction. That being said, they have begun to acknowledge the need to expand the Council to reflect, first, the changes in the membership of the United Nations, and, secondly, the geopolitical changes in the international arena. But what is more difficult is that numerous desired reforms that are right and enjoy support require amendment to some provisions of the Charter.

In order to break the vicious cycle and not have to return to the Assembly to take up, once again, the same discussion about the need for reform of the Security Council, we feel that we must immediately agree procedures that do not require a Charter amendment, such as enhancing the mechanisms of the Council and developing its working methods. This would not only secure transparency, allowing States to access information and documents and know the content of the work of the Council's committees, in order to enhance the principle of accountability, but would also allow countries to be privy to consultations and have their delegations heard on matters concerning them when decisions are made and resolutions are passed. We would thereby be taking a concrete first step towards the most important reform, one to which we aspire and which remains a goal from which we should never retreat: a Security Council that is more representative, democratic, effective and just.

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Angola yesterday afternoon in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of African States. We also commend the President of the Security Council, the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, for introducing the annual report of the Council (A/62/2).

The annual report of the Security Council indicates the many areas all over the world, and particularly in Africa, where the Council remains engaged in helping to resolve conflict. The Security Council continues to play an important role in Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sudan, Burundi and Timor-Leste. It has stimulated constructive debate on important global issues, such as security sector reform, the role of women in peacekeeping operations and the relationship between the Council and regional organizations in terms of Chapter VIII of the Charter.

Mr. Soborun (Mauritius), Vice-President, took the Chair.

At the same time, we must also, most unfortunately, acknowledge that the Security Council has not been successful in resolving some conflict situations, or has failed to intervene at all in others. The most serious threat to the credibility of the Council remains its inability, after 60 years, to play a meaningful role on the issue of Palestine.

It is our hope that the Council will stem the erosion of its credibility by transcending its divisions and the national interests of its members and uniformly discharging its Charter-based mandate to maintain international peace and security.

Membership of the Council confers a global responsibility, in that all of its members are entrusted with the task of helping to advance peace throughout the world. South Africa does not accept a status quo where some issues on the Council's agenda — such as counter-terrorism, non-proliferation, Kosovo and Western Sahara — are regarded as the preserve of some countries, to the exclusion of others.

On the vital issue of reform of the Security Council, let me reiterate my delegation's continued commitment to the African position. South Africa believes that meaningful reform should lead to the expansion of the Council's membership in both the permanent and non-permanent categories, in order to render it more democratic, legitimate, representative and responsive.

Our heads of State or Government resolved in the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) and the 2005 World Summit Outcome to, inter alia, intensify their efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects as an essential element of overall efforts to reform the United Nations in order to make it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent, and thus to further enhance its effectiveness and legitimacy and the implementation of its decisions.

In that context, the General Assembly unanimously decided, in adopting on 17 September 2007 the draft decision recommended by its Open-ended Working Group, that

> "the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council should be considered during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly so that further concrete results may be achieved, including through intergovernmental negotiations, building on the progress achieved so far, particularly at the sixty-first session, as well as the positions of and proposals made by Member States". (*decision 61/561, para. d*)

To fulfil that long-outstanding mandate from our Heads of State and Government, my delegation joins others in calling on the President of the General Assembly to urgently initiate intergovernmental negotiations and determine, through an objective and transparent method, the elements that command the widest support, so that they can serve as the basis for such intergovernmental negotiations.

South Africa stands ready to negotiate in that process, based on our principled position, while being cognizant that all Member States and groups will have to demonstrate greater flexibility, political will and commitment if we are to collectively move the process of the reform of the Security Council forward.

We also call on the President of the General Assembly to periodically inform Member States about progress in achieving concrete results on the comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

Mr. Mavroyiannis (Cyprus): I thank Ambassador Natalegawa, Permanent Representative of Indonesia and President of the Security Council for this month, for his introduction yesterday morning of the report of the Council (A/62/2).

We appreciate the informative content of the report, as well as the actual work done by the Council during the reporting period. We consider, however, that the format of the report should have been geared towards facilitating the involvement of the wider membership of the Organization in the work of the Security Council. We consider that the primary objective of the report should be to associate the States that are not members of the Council in its substantive work, to assess the state of efforts in maintaining international peace and security, to evaluate the contribution of the Council in that endeavour and to decide how the General Assembly could make a concrete contribution in this field.

Without prejudice to the provisions of the Charter, the Council could interact more frequently and systematically with the General Assembly, taking advantage of the Assembly's universal participation, in order to outline developments regarding its work so as to attract input that is pertinent to ongoing discussions. We consider that substantive input on the work of these two organs should be exchanged on a systematic basis and that expertise, lessons learned and intelligence should be transferred from one to the other.

Our goal is not to determine a hierarchical relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council. Rather than devoting a large part of our discussions to the respective competencies of the two organs by way of trying to define and defend each one's territory, it would be more productive to focus on the consolidation of a mutually reinforcing relationship, of synergy and cooperation, with a view to maximizing the potential and effectiveness of the Organization as a whole.

Another key element that we feel is missing from the report is the impact-assessment dimension — that is, whether and to what extent the Council's involvement in a given situation has improved it. That kind of assessment could serve as a departure point for the identification of Council practices that have proved constructive, and of others that have not.

I turn briefly to Security Council reform, and begin by noting the strong recurring themes that have dominated our discussions in that field. While it is true that many of the concerns of Member States with respect to the current Council set-up and working methods have not changed, we feel that the centre of our discussions has shifted and that that development must be taken into account.

After the work done during the sixty-first session and the more focused parameters of discussion that have emerged as a result of that work, we inevitably find ourselves in a more advanced phase of discussion. That new phase requires action, as opposed to the reiteration of positions.

Despite the specificities of the issue of Security Council reform, there is nothing that says that action cannot be successfully pursued with the means we have had at our disposal thus far. We consider that the success of a negotiation process hinges upon certain simple elements: the appointment of a coordinator, the presentation of a text that will serve as a basis for negotiation and a flexible methodology that will allow us to achieve results, rather than compel us to sacrifice substance for the sake of formalities.

I do not believe that we are facing unsolvable riddles as to how to move forward. It seems that States are willing to negotiate in an effort to try to crystallize the possible outcome of a reform process so that they can assess their options and make appropriate decisions. We take it for granted that all Member States are stakeholders in Security Council reform, because it is in the best interests of all that the Council functions as effectively as possible and enjoys the maximum degree of legitimacy.

Derivatively, other elements of reform that concern particular segments of the membership will be addressed through the satisfaction of the imperative objectives I have outlined. Components of reform, like accountability, transparency, inclusiveness, participation and efficiency, cannot be divorced from the more general context in which they would be best served, as each of them is a notion that is meaningful only once tested against and employed in the service of the cross-cutting notion of effectiveness.

Reform is not an end in itself. It is pursued because the quasi-totality of the membership share the view that there is scope for improving the Council's effectiveness, legitimacy and representativity, as well as the broader membership's access to and association with its work, with a view to enhancing its role as the international community's instrument par excellence in the service of maintaining and restoring international peace and security, in accordance with international law and the Charter. Only such improvements could serve as justification for Security Council reform, and we should not lose sight of this teleological dimension.

We do not question the perspective of any of the countries that seek enhanced participation, one way or another, and we are all fully aware of the various proposals that have surfaced in recent years. It is not feasible, however, in the face of the incompatibility of vocations, to have each one of those visions fully accomplished.

At the same time, we cannot ignore either the main representatives of the new geopolitical realities of our times or the need to afford a louder voice to countries representing developing countries and emerging actors that have been insufficiently accounted for until now. Drawing on the specific morphology of our own geographical region, I would give the example of Egypt, a country with a multifaceted role and identity in Africa, the Mediterranean, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Middle East, the Arab world and the developing world. The same applies, of course, to other players from the known configurations of stakeholders.

However, despite the many concrete examples before us, we must not forget that everything is subordinate to the quality of the reform, and that the latter must be reached through the application of broader considerations and not through the extrapolation of specific demands. At this juncture, and without prejudice to the formal position of any stakeholder, we believe that there is a limited, yet meaningful, possibility of change if we focus on a modest and pragmatic, but provisional, reform that will improve the situation in the short and medium term, providing valuable lessons in terms of best practices along the way. Such a provisional arrangement should, of course, be revisited and reviewed after a predetermined period of time, so as not to pre-empt a more definitive reform when respective positions and the prevailing conditions might, hopefully, be more conducive to that.

Sir John Sawers (United Kingdom): We are grateful to the President of the General Assembly for convening this debate. I thank the Permanent Representative of Indonesia for his comments on the report of the Security Council (A/62/2), on behalf of all members of the Council. I also thank the Permanent Mission of China for leading the work on the Council's report with the Secretariat.

On the second item on the agenda of this joint debate, I welcome the opportunity to discuss reform of the Security Council. The United Kingdom shares the ambition expressed by previous speakers yesterday and today that we achieve concrete steps towards agreement on Security Council reform during the sixty-second session.

As the British Foreign Secretary said in this Hall during this year's general debate (see A/62/PV.9), international institutions need to reflect the world today, and not the world as it was. Reform of the United Nations in all its aspects, including the Security Council, is pivotal to progress. The status quo on United Nations reform is neither sustainable nor satisfactory. That includes the Security Council.

The United Kingdom therefore welcomes the prospect of intergovernmental negotiations, as agreed by the Assembly in September. These would build on developments realized under the stewardship of the former President of the General Assembly. We look forward to a detailed proposal from the current President of the Assembly in the weeks ahead on the basis for taking negotiations forward.

On the substance of reform, the United Kingdom seeks a Security Council that is more representative of today's world, yet no less effective or capable of taking the tough decisions needed in the face of the many threats to peace and international security that the Council deals with. To that end, we support permanent membership for Germany, Japan, India and Brazil, and permanent representation from Africa. As my Prime Minister, Mr. Gordon Brown, said in a speech in London last night,

> "Long-term, but now also interim, options must be examined to reform a United Nations Security Council — whose permanent members do not include Japan, India, Brazil, Germany, or any African country — to make the Council more representative, more credible and more effective".

The United Kingdom is not wedded to a single model of Council reform. We believe the membership should seek as much common ground as we can. That will require some flexibility. We should be open to considering an interim solution if that would break the deadlock.

We must also continue to improve the Council's working methods, in particular to make our work more efficient and more inclusive. This is an issue in which all Member States have an interest, and Council members have particular responsibility. We support the reforms that the Council agreed in 2006, and we underline the importance of their being more consistently implemented.

I conclude by reiterating the support of the United Kingdom for the Security Council reform process, and for the continuing leadership of the President of the General Assembly on this important issue. We hope to see progress in this session.

Mr. Beck (Solomon Islands): Security Council reform was one of the issues most referred to during the recent general debate. It has been with the

Assembly for the last 14 years, from the forty-eighth session to the sixty-second. My delegation is comforted by the current President's commitment to take concrete action on Security Council reform, having identified United Nations reform as one of his five priority areas of focus during his term in office. Solomon Islands, in that regard, stands ready to support Mr. Kerim's leadership in taking the matter to another level.

Before going further into the issue of Security Council reform, my delegation would like to thank Indonesia, in its capacity as President of the Security Council, for introducing the Council's annual report and for convening the open debate on the role of regional and subregional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security last week.

Very briefly on the relationship between the Security Council and the regional and subregional organizations, as stated by my delegation during the Security Council's open debate, our leaders called at the 2005 Summit for a formal process between the Security Council and the regional and subregional organizations. That is important, given the fact that regional security mechanisms have gone farther into countries than our multilateral system. We must preserve the centrality of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security. That is provided for under Article 54 of our Charter, but unfortunately is hardly observed.

Turning now to the reform of the Security Council, it is urgent to reform the Council. The Council is not only the principal organ of our multilateral system, but also the only body that defines and determines what constitutes a threat to international peace. Let me put a human face on it. Countries can call for security attention on their specific situation in this Assembly, but if they do not get support from our Council members, in particular the permanent five, they will not receive attention. Solomon Islands went through a conflict situation, but received no support despite registering the matter a couple of years back. It is therefore important to have a reformed Council that is more responsive to the realities of today — a Council that structurally respond to the pain and suffering of those going through conflicts.

It is in that connection that my delegation would like to use this opportunity to propose ways and means of advancing the issue into an intergovernmental negotiation phase. To begin with, allow me to make some comments on some elements that the negotiation process must have.

First, whatever negotiation model we adopt, it must be result-oriented and exercised in an open, transparent and all-inclusive manner.

Secondly, if we are to be successful, my delegation hopes that all groups and members approach the negotiation process with an open mind and flexibility. We must move beyond consultation, as suggested by some delegations, lest we begin restating our respective positions. Special efforts must be made to work towards a tangible, realistic and viable compromise that we can all live with.

Thirdly, our process must conform to the General Assembly's rules and procedures. My delegation makes special mention of that, as some delegations have proposed that the widest possible political agreement be reached. Solomon Islands feels, in that regard, that a two-thirds majority should be sufficient in effecting any decisions of importance if we are serious about making any real progress.

In taking the matter forward, Solomon Islands believes that we must build on the progress made Mr. Kerim's predecessor, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, and on Japan's work on the Security Council's working methods, amongst others, but we must also be innovative in having the intergovernmental negotiation process be result-oriented.

Solomon Islands wishes to propose that we could begin negotiations by examining the elements picked up by the facilitators. After 14 years of extensive consultations, my delegation feels that the time is now ripe to see what elements we should begin negotiations on. The various positions have been put forward by the various groups; those could be merged, where possible, into one text where there are commonalities. There are proposals by the Group of Four in document A/59/L.69, the Uniting for Consensus group in document A/59/L.68, and the African Group in document A/59/L.67, as well as the S-5 submission on working methods in document A/60/49.

We could also complement that with a questionnaire or a straw-poll process to be carried out by the President of the General Assembly in an effort to reach out to all members of the Assembly. Issues for negotiation, in my delegation's view, could be summarized as follows: the enlargement of the Council in both permanent and non-permanent seats; the Security Council's working methods; the right of veto; the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council; the relationship between the Security Council and the regional and subregional institutions; and, of course, the review process.

In conclusion, we have heard a number of proposals from various delegations to take us forward into an intergovernmental negotiation process. Solomon Islands looks to Mr. Kerim's leadership on the matter and once again assures him of its support. It is also our fervent hope that the President of the General Assembly may wish to consider having a periodic reporting system to the Assembly so as to ensure that the momentum he has started remains on track and is action-oriented.

Mr. Lidén (Sweden): It is time for a new momentum and a new effort to reform the Security Council and its composition, size and working methods. We need a Council that better reflects today's realities, with working methods that are transparent and open. We need more general trust in the United Nations system and a Security Council that offers a sense of inclusiveness and belonging to all of us, whoever we are and wherever we live.

It should be obvious that the regions of Africa, Asia and Latin America have to be better represented, and that all countries should have a fair chance to serve on the Council from time to time. For the United Nations to be relevant on issues of security, we need a Security Council that not only enjoys the respect of Member States and their populations, but is also perceived as fair and legitimate.

As new threats and challenges appear, the United Nations has to adapt. We want to see a United Nations that is relevant, legitimate, effective and capable of dealing with emerging threats to our common security. Reform of the Security Council is, in our view, long overdue, and the consultations on that issue that we have seen so far have not delivered any substantial results. We now need to start result-oriented intergovernmental negotiations to bring the process forward.

As previously stated, Sweden is open to the idea of an enlargement of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. However, we should seek the broadest possible agreement. That is necessary if the Council is to be perceived as legitimate and to avoid new divisions and frustrations that could harm our work in the United Nations for a long time to come.

We also wish to repeat that the Security Council must be an effective body able to act swiftly when needed. We therefore strongly believe that the veto power should not be extended. Instead, we would like to see a veto-free culture be promoted in the Council. In our view, any reform should be the subject of a recurrent and effective review mechanism. A decision to accept new permanent members on the Council should, in our view, not be easy to change, but we should avoid decisions which are irreversible for all time to come. We also need to be able to open up to further changes in the future. As the world changes, the Security Council has to be able to change.

If we are not ready to agree on such a more long-term reform, one possibility could be to look at an interim or transitional solution that could eventually lead to a more permanent arrangement. Moreover, as we have stated before, we believe that the Security Council's working methods should be made more open and transparent. We would like to see that issue advanced further, even without immediate agreement on the composition of the Council.

As we enter the intergovernmental negotiations, we all need to be creative, have an open mind and show flexibility. For its part, Sweden is ready to discuss new ideas and will continue to engage actively in a constructive dialogue on how to reform the Security Council.

Mr. Sareer (Maldives): At the outset, my delegation would like to join previous speakers in expressing our appreciation to the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Natalegawa, Permanent Representative of Indonesia, for his presentation of the annual report of the Council, covering the period from 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007 (A/62/2). We would also like to thank the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, for the exemplary leadership she demonstrated as the Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council during the previous session. Our deep gratitude also goes to the tedious work undertaken by the facilitators appointed by her to assist the process.

Maldives remains convinced that the United Nations is the only organization that is capable of creating a more peaceful and prosperous world for humanity. The principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations are as relevant and valid today as they were when formulated in 1946, but the challenges that confront the Organization in this globalized world are surely not the same as when it was created six decades ago.

Reforming and restructuring the Organization to effectively address those challenges, therefore, remains a major hurdle to cross. While we acknowledge with satisfaction the numerous reforms that have already been implemented over the past few years, it is disappointing to note that the proposed reforms of the Security Council, the principal organ entrusted with the primary task of maintaining international peace and security, continue to elude us without any tangible results.

My delegation sincerely believes that reforming the Security Council remains central and should become part and parcel of the entire United Nations reform process if the United Nations is to remain a credible and effective Organization. The Council must be reformed to reflect the geopolitical realities of the modern world. While we recognize the difficulties we face, we sincerely believe that the reforms should be comprehensive and include the expansion of its membership in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories, the issue of veto, and its decision-making process. Similarly, the issues relating to the working methods and their transparency, and the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly are equally important areas that need to be addressed in a comprehensive manner.

Maldives is convinced that any expansion of the Security Council should reflect the growth of United Nations membership and its present cultural diversity. We would like to see the process result in reform that would make the Security Council more representative, democratic and transparent. We share the view that reforms of the Council should become an integral part of the United Nations reform process and that maintaining the status quo is not acceptable. We value the importance of the need to enhance Member States' access to the Council, both in terms of increasing their chances to serve as members and, while not members, to increase their involvement in the Council's work. We also welcome the Working Group's recommendation that any enlargement should address the underrepresentation of developing countries as well as small States.

Security priorities may vary from State to State. For the Maldives and many other small, low-lying island States in the world, peace and security are derived not only from the absence of war or conflicts. The threats posed by global climate change and related consequences have now become a threat that is linked directly to the sheer survival of some of those small States. In our view, the issue of climate change is intrinsically an issue of international peace and security that requires the urgent and paramount attention of all the organs of the Organization, including the Security Council.

In that regard, my delegation appreciates the historic step taken by the Security Council in convening, on 17 April 2007, the first-ever debate exploring the potential impacts of climate change on international peace and security. Maldives consider that to be an important step in the right direction and we believe that close cooperation and coordination among all principal organs are indispensable in order to enable the Organization to remain relevant and capable of meeting such new and emerging threats and challenges.

Before I conclude, allow me to reiterate our firm belief that the lack of common ground on some of the major aspects of the Council reforms should not be used as an excuse for no action. Our decision to support the G-4 proposals is based primarily on our conviction that no action would be counterproductive to the Organization. We sincerely believe that we should proceed with the enlargement of the membership in both the permanent and non-permanent categories, and include in that enlargement countries such as Japan, India and other Member States that have proved their commitment and capacity to serve as permanent members and would represent the wider membership of the present-day United Nations. After all, the aim of the reform process is the enhancement of the credibility, legitimacy and universal character of the Organization.

As a responsible member of the international community, I assure the Assembly that the Maldives will continue to play its role in upholding and promoting the objectives of the United Nations.

Mrs. Aitimova (Kazakhstan): At the outset, I would like to thank the Security Council and the Secretariat for the comprehensive report on the work of the Council during the past year, and in particular Ambassador Marty Natalegawa of Indonesia, the current President of the Council, for introducing the Security Council's report (A/62/2).

During the past year, the Security Council has made a significant contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security, although not all that was planned has been achieved so far. We hope that the Council will continue energetically considering the urgent issues on its agenda and find new approaches and ways to resolve them.

We believe that some matters brought to the attention of the Security Council through communications of Member States, but not discussed at meetings of the Council during the period covered, could be considered in the future, taking into account their importance and relevance to the activity of the Council in preserving peace and security.

We highly appreciate the integrated measures of the Organization to settle the situations in the Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Afghanistan, Kosovo, the Middle East and other topical issues of world security.

The lack of international consensus on the issue of non-proliferation has led to a dramatic weakening of the collective security system. We believe that the Council should continue its focus on that issue and consider new approaches to ensure real non-proliferation in a new environment. In that regard, Kazakhstan proposes that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons be adapted to the new realities.

The United Nations continues to be at the forefront of the battle against international terrorism. My delegation would like to express its appreciation to Ambassador Ricardo Alberto Arias of Panama, the current Chairman of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), for his leadership in steering the activities of the Committee.

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, adopted in September 2006 as resolution 60/288, outlined the fact that a consistent and comprehensive response to terrorism would be greatly enhanced by the involvement of civil society and the private sector. Hence, we call on the CTC to elaborate specific and comprehensive recommendations for the development of partnerships among Government, the private sector and civil society in combating terrorism.

Kazakhstan is fully committed to supporting the activities of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban, and commends its work under the chairmanship of Ambassador Johan Verbeke. A wide range of issues related to strengthening cooperation in combating terrorism in the region of Central Asia were discussed during his visit to Kazakhstan in October 2007. My Government will continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and give all possible support to that important body.

During the past year, there has been a surge in the demand for United Nations conflict-prevention and management, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Recognizing the importance of gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping operations, we are particularly pleased with the Council's ongoing attention to the issue of women, peace and security.

We recognize the need to develop close cooperation between the Security Council, Member States and regional arrangements in the search for ways and means to ensure effective responses to emerging complex conflict situations when measures to keep peace and promote development often have to be taken simultaneously. In that context, we appreciate the establishment at Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, and express our readiness to closely cooperate with the Centre and our neighbours in order to strengthen regional capacities for conflict prevention.

One of the urgent issues on the agenda of the United Nations is reform of the Security Council, which bears responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. We are convinced that the momentum generated by the informal consultations in the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform during the sixty-first session should be maintained, and we call on the President of the General

Assembly to continue those consultations during the current session with a view to commencing intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. We have to find an optimal solution; if we do not, we will burden the next generation with that complicated issue. The time we have spent on this question is already equal to the age of a teenager.

Kazakhstan understands that there is general agreement among Member States on the need to reform the Security Council. The position of Kazakhstan on that issue has been expressed on repeated occasions. We share the perception of the urgency of a changed Security Council, which needs to be more representative, more legitimate, more transparent and more efficient. Kazakhstan holds the view that, in its current form, the Security Council no longer reflects the realities of our world. We believe that equitable representation of Member States in the Security Council could strengthen its ability to effectively face the challenges of the twenty-first century and to play its role in the settlement of crisis situations.

The Council should be revitalized by the addition of new permanent and non-permanent members. We stand for the expansion of the Security Council on the basis of equitable geographic representation and respect for the sovereign equality of all Member States. Asia, Africa and Latin America should have a wider representation in the Security Council and should be directly involved in the search for solutions to the important problems facing the international community.

Since becoming a Member of the United Nations in 1992, Kazakhstan has served in a number of important bodies of the Organization, but not in the Security Council. During the 15 years of its United Nations membership, Kazakhstan has made an important contribution to international peace and security, sustainable development and environmental agenda. The renunciation of nuclear weapons, the adoption of confidence-building measures in Asia, the facilitation of integration processes in Eurasia, the advancement of the interests of landlocked countries and the promotion of a dialogue between civilizations and religions represent just a sample of the steps taken by my country in the spirit of the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.

We are confident of our capacity to contribute to the work of the Council and announced 10 years ago our candidature for a non-permanent seat for the period 2011-2012. It is our hope that the General Assembly will support Kazakhstan's candidacy during the elections in 2010. We look forward to working closely with the Security Council and to participating actively in all its efforts to meet the global need for peace.

Mr. Abdulatif (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to extend my thanks to the President of the Security Council, the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, who briefed us on the Council's activities during the sixtieth and the sixty-first sessions.

I also wish to align myself with the statement made by the representative of Angola on behalf of the African Group.

The 2005 World Summit Outcome Document called for tangible reform of the organs of the United Nations to enable it to achieve the purposes and principles for which it was established. It stressed, in particular, speedy reform of the Security Council in order to make it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent and thus to further enhance its effectiveness, its legitimacy and the implementation of its resolutions.

Although some progress has been achieved in reforming several United Nations bodies, the issue of Security Council reform before the United Nations remains an intractable matter for the international community. We still urgently need to address the issue of how to make the Security Council more balanced in terms of ensuring equitable regional representation, membership, and improved working methods. That includes an examination of the privilege of the veto power and preventing the Security Council's encroachment on the competencies of other United Nations organs. Those issues fundamentally touch the very heart of the overall United Nations reform process.

My country's delegation appreciates the consultations that occurred within the framework of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council. It also highly appreciates the strenuous efforts exerted personally by the previous President of the General Assembly, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, and the facilitators appointed by her, and the resulting ideas and suggestions. Those were included in the Working Group report endorsed by the General Assembly on 14 September 2007, and the most important among those ideas and suggestions states that additional practical steps should be taken, including by means of intergovernmental negotiations.

My country's delegation wishes to underline the fact that the mandate of those negotiations, if held, must have as a starting point the discussions that occurred during the General Assembly's previous session, in addition to the positions of the Member States and the suggestions they have put forward. A realistic evaluation of the consultations and delegations' differing points of view vis-à-vis Security Council reform all require us to consider steps that will push the ongoing endeavours forward and bring that process, which has extended for many years, to an end.

Africa is the continent that has been most adversely affected by measures enacted after the Second World War. Those include the establishment of the Security Council, which was achieved in the absence of most African countries, which were suffering under colonialism and racism. Today, African countries constitute more than a quarter of the States Members of the United Nations. It is imperative that Africa be treated with justice and that its rights be recognized, thereby undoing the historical wrongs inflicted upon it and ending its marginalization by granting it just and fair representation in the Security Council, including the permanent membership that other continents enjoy.

My country's delegation therefore underlines the common African position calling for Africa to be granted two permanent seats on the Security Council, with the right of veto, and five non-permanent seats. That position emerged in the Ezulwini Consensus and was reiterated at the fifth African Union summit conference held in Sirte on 4 and 5 July 2005, as well as at subsequent summits.

With regard to improving the working methods of the Security Council, my delegation underlines the fact that any reform process of the Council, be it temporary or permanent, partial or complete, will be of no significance if the issue of the right of veto is not addressed. That right has been misused in so many cases at the expense of just causes and the rights of vulnerable peoples, thereby damaging the credibility of the Security Council in particular and of the United Nations in general. That fact alone justifies efforts to abrogate or at least limit that privilege.

No reform process will be of any use if it does not include reactivating the role of the General Assembly and preventing the Security Council from encroaching on the General Assembly's mandate, as defined in the Charter. It has become essential for the General Assembly to take urgent action in that regard. We also call for attention to be paid to the contents of the Security Council's reports. They do not provide a clear picture of what occurs in the Council or demonstrate its commitment to abide by the General Assembly's resolutions, especially in the light of the reports' narrative aspects, which analyse considerations on the basis of the decisions adopted and the positions taken by countries, especially those of the permanent members. Similarly, attention must be given to the reasons that prevent the Council from taking strong positions on important issues related to international peace and security.

We continue to hope that the efforts in the coming phase will result in an approach that addresses the deep and radical reform that the Council requires, and not in approaches that are unable to deliver the changes necessary to the Security Council's balance and performance. The next phase will require serious political will and an objective and deep consideration of what is needed to achieve the desired balance in the Security Council. We wish to underline my delegation's full readiness to cooperate in dealing once again with this important subject.

Mr. Yousfi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): May I first thank Ambassador Marty Natalegawa, Permanent Representative of Indonesia, for his presentation of the report of the Security Council for the review period ending on 31 July 2007.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate the new members elected to the Council — the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Burkina Faso, Viet Nam, Croatia and Costa Rica.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Ambassador Gaspar Martins of Angola on behalf of the African Group.

We note once again that the Security Council's report continues to suffer from the same insufficiencies referred to in considerations of previous reports, and that there is clearly no desire on the Council's part to take into consideration the observations and expectations of Member States that wish to see improvement in both the contents and presentation of the report. My delegation wishes to point out in particular that the Security Council continues to disregard the General Assembly's repeated requests to submit to it special reports pursuant to paragraph 1 of Article 15 and paragraph 3 of Article 24 of the Charter, just as it ignores decisions adopted in Assembly resolutions on its revitalization, which are designed to improve coordination and cooperation among the principal organs.

On reading the report, we note that the Council's activities continue to follow two tracks. On the one hand, the Council has an extremely busy agenda, as demonstrated by the number of meetings held and decisions adopted during the period under review. On the other hand, there is clearly an ongoing impulse to expand the Council's field of competence, to the detriment of the prerogatives of the other principal organs, in pursuit of an abusive and therefore disputed interpretation of the concept of threats to international peace and security. The first trend is not necessarily proof of effectiveness, whereas the second gives rise to valid concerns within the General Assembly in that it demonstrates a determination to address new threats to our collective security in an elitist and non-democratic manner.

While my delegation is prepared to acknowledge that there may be areas in which the General Assembly's concerns in the face of the emergence of new types of threats are shared by the Security Council, we would stress that the nature of such threats is the perfect validation of the expression of the co-responsibility of all members of the international community through a joint approach to such problems among the principal organs. In that regard, my delegation deplores the Security Council's ongoing and evident reluctance to address the idea of coordination, including where the Charter explicitly identifies an area as falling within the common purview of the General Assembly and the Security Council, such as the appointment of the Secretary-General.

At the sixty-first session, Member States adopted by consensus the recommendations of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council (decision 61/561), thereby extending the Working Group's mandate to the sixty-second session and calling for an intergovernmental negotiating process with a view to achieving tangible results based on the report of the facilitators and the positions and proposals set forth by Member States. Those recommendations provide valuable guidelines for both the framework and the contents of the negotiations.

How, then, should we proceed in future? First, we believe that the common sense of the urgent need to make the Security Council more representative and democratic should not be confused with haste to launch intergovernmental negotiations. From our perspective, the rapid onset of negotiations is less important than meeting the requirements necessary to their success.

Secondly, the negotiating framework should be open-ended, transparent and inclusive. In our view, only the framework of the Open-ended Working Group can satisfy such requirements. At this stage, any other restricted mechanism would fuel suspicions and should be avoided. If negotiations are to be held and evolve in a satisfactory manner, we trust in the leadership of the President of the General Assembly to iron out any temporary difficulties.

Thirdly, negotiations must begin on the basis of the initial positions of every group and existing proposals. It would not be productive to require any State or group of States to abandon its initial position as a prerequisite to launching the negotiations. Any solution — be it definitive, intermediate or temporary — that might enjoy the broadest possible support within the General Assembly should constitute the outcome of negotiations and not their point of departure.

Fourthly, the time remaining before the conclusion of the sixty-second session is sufficient and reasonable for conducting calm negotiations, with no need to impose any artificial deadline.

Fifthly, among the preconditions for the commencement of negotiations, we believe that Member States must make an unequivocal commitment to the President of the General Assembly not to develop any parallel process other than that involving the submission of draft resolutions or the framework of restricted negotiations.

Sixthly, when negotiations begin, Algeria intends to play an active role therein on the basis of the common African position defined in the Ezulwini Consensus and confirmed at the African summit in Sirte, and is convinced of the rightness and legitimacy of that position.

Mrs. Asmadi (Indonesia): Let me begin by expressing our gratitude to the President of the General Assembly for convening this very important joint debate.

My delegation's deep appreciation also goes to his predecessor, Ms. Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, for her efforts in trying to bring Member States together on the very difficult question of Security Council reform. We are confident that the work done will be carried forward effectively under Mr. Kerim's able guidance.

My delegation has spoken on the report of the Security Council on behalf of the Council. We would like to focus now, in our national capacity, on certain aspects pertaining to the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

The United Nations is at a critical juncture in its history. It would not be wrong to say that the world is passing through one of its most turbulent and uncertain periods. Geopolitical upheavals, imbalanced situations in the economic and social fields, pockets of poverty, and climate change confront the global citizenry with most serious questions. A judicious and equitable world order would help us properly to tackle those and other challenges of collective concern.

As highlighted by the Secretary-General, "[t]he quest for a more peaceful and secure world is one of the main pillars of the work of the Organization" (*A/61/1, para. 42*). The Security Council, as the principal organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, is required to be fully equipped to tackle the associated challenges of the twenty-first century. It can do so effectively only if its composition and functioning respond to the realities of today and if it is duly mindful of the interests of developing countries, in which the majority of the world's people reside.

The Council's legitimacy is essential. It is a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. The Council represents the collective voice of Members and not just their individual interests. Its legitimacy comes not only from the power that each State member of the Council possesses, but also from the legitimacy of the collective will and from Charter-based collective understandings of the widest possible membership.

Rather, the Council will need to be restructured based on the paradigm of the equality of all States, whereby States are potentially selected from their respected regions. Unless that is manifested through a fair reform of the Council, it will be difficult to achieve legitimacy for that crucial organ.

The trust and respect of the peoples of the world are absolutely vital for the Council in the successful exercise of its mandate. With reform, future decisions of the Council should inspire a greater sense of collectiveness. They should better reflect positions based on the collective interests of States, rather than on certain national interests of its members. In that context, a greater role for the regional approach may be an interesting idea to be further explored.

Indonesia regards the comprehensive reform of the Security Council's membership and its working methods as fundamental to bolstering the dynamic of peaceful inter-State relations, as well as an integral feature of the broader United Nations reform process. We are willing to consider different proposals on the Council's reform so long as they are embedded in the principles of democracy, accountability and fairness, and lead to the strengthening of the representation of the developing countries. We believe that the rich civilizational diversity of our world should also be seen clearly in the constitution of the reformed Council.

There needs to be a substantive change in the long-standing key issues of categories of membership, country representation criteria, veto, transparency, working methods and balanced relations with the other principal organs of the United Nations.

Considerable good work was accomplished on those issues at the previous session of the General Assembly. The Open-ended Working Group on Council reform and all the facilitators appointed by the President of the General Assembly did an exemplary job in difficult circumstances. We must maintain the generated momentum and build on the work done.

In our view, the report contained in document A/61/47 presents a balanced reflection of the different opinions among the General Assembly's membership. The report lays down several concrete options. Those may not be ideal for all of us; nonetheless, they provide us with some forward-looking and workable ideas, given the present diversity in delegations' positions.

We support the concept of an intermediary approach with a prior agreed review mechanism, as contained in the report. That approach enjoys the most support among Members. However, we feel that there should be further consultations on those critical matters to minimize differences. We need to garner the widest possible agreement, since a clear ownership of the Council's reform is crucial to the subsequent steps that would ultimately lead to amending the Charter. In that regard, the General Assembly, as the chief deliberative and decision-making organ of the United Nations, should continue to act as the fulcrum of all our activities to achieve Council reform.

We hope that Member States will intensify their efforts to attain the much-needed reform. Indonesia reiterates its readiness to cooperate with delegations in working to achieve a comprehensive and robust reform of the Council.

Mr. Ali (Malaysia): My delegation is pleased to participate in this joint debate on agenda items 9 and 122.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the President of the Security Council for the month of November, Ambassador Marty Natalegawa of Indonesia, for presenting to the General Assembly the annual report of the Security Council for the period 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007, as contained in document A/62/2.

My delegation appreciates the vital contribution and pivotal role of the Security Council in the maintenance of global peace and security. The consideration of the annual report of the Security Council by the General Assembly is in keeping with Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, and provides an opportunity for the wider membership of the Organization to assess the work and performance of the Council, including its efficiency, effectiveness and relevance. The report also contributes to transparency in the work of the Council, which should be the cornerstone of the working methods of the Council.

The report provides factual accounts of how the Council took action on various issues before it. While my delegation welcomes that factual reporting, it lacks real value in helping us to consider the actual work of the Council in the maintenance of peace and security. We are of the view that the report of the Council should be more substantive and analytical. It should, inter alia, provide justification and rationales behind major actions taken by the Council. It is important for the wider membership of the United Nations to be apprised of the decisions of the Council on matters of international peace and security, as such decisions and actions also have an impact on Members. That would also be in line with promoting greater transparency and accountability in the work of the Council.

We are pleased to note that the Council addressed a wide range of issues relating to peace and security during the period under review, which reaffirms the trend in recent years of an increase in the volume and scope of the activities of the Council. Over the period reported, we note also that the Council held a total of 224 formal meetings, adopted 71 resolutions and issued 52 presidential statements.

Conflicts and instability in Africa continue to be at the forefront of the Council's agenda, though other issues also remained high on the agenda for the Council's consideration. We commend the tireless effort of the Council in maintaining peace and security, particularly in conflict-affected regions and areas. Malaysia reaffirms its commitment to working with the Council in that regard.

The Malaysian delegation welcomes the Council's continued consideration of the question of Palestine and the Middle East through its monthly briefings, as well as in open debates. We see much value in that, especially since the question of Palestine remains the only issue that the Council has continued to grapple with for more than 40 years. Despite the Council's monthly consideration of that matter, it has not had a significant impact on the situation on the ground. Violence continues unabated, while the deaths of civilians and the destruction of their homes and infrastructure continue to mount, particularly on the Palestinian side.

While the Council is seen to be authoritative and effective on situations in other parts of the world, unfortunately the contrary could be said with regard to the Palestinian issue. The report of the Security Council shows the lack of substantive action by the Council on that important matter. The Council must improve and maintain its credibility by enforcing its authority in that question, and must be seen to discharge its responsibilities in maintaining peace and security in the region. We are confident that the Council will resist any attempt by any parties to influence it to act contrary to that objective.

The practice of holding open meetings of the Council provides an opportunity to the wider membership of the United Nations to participate in the Council's work. Malaysia also agrees that the holding of thematic discussions is useful to improving the effectiveness of the Council. We consider thematic discussions and open debates to be avenues for allowing Council members and the wider membership of the United Nations to offer views and suggestions on issues directly related to the work of the Council. We are confident that the contributions of non-members of the Security Council to those debates are useful inputs to the Council.

While welcoming the convening of thematic debates and given the increasing workload of the Council, we believe that the Council should be more selective and should focus on achieving concrete results that would have an impact on the performance not only of the Council itself, but also of the United Nations at large. We are also of the view that the outcomes of thematic discussions in the Council should be submitted as reports to the General Assembly, consistent with Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter.

Turning to agenda item 122, my delegation agrees with the prevailing view that the United Nations, including the Security Council, needs to be reformed in a comprehensive manner in terms of its working methods and of expansion of its membership to make it more legitimate, representative, democratic and transparent. Our discussions at the previous session have shown that there is great interest among Member States in seeing the Council reformed in a comprehensive manner. Any reform of the United Nations would not be complete without the long-overdue reform of the Security Council.

In that regard, we would like to thank Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, for her efforts to reinvigorate the debate on Council reform. The discussions we had last session clearly showed an emerging consensus. The only difference, however, appears to be in the approach.

My delegation endorses a transitional approach, whereby we would see some tangible results in our deliberations. Such an approach, however, should not distract us from the ultimate goal of comprehensive Council reform. We see much value in taking smaller steps to reach our intended destination, rather than a risky giant leap that would cause us to fall. A mid-term assessment or a review mechanism would be crucial for us to assess our progress, as it would allow us to further improve and address any shortcomings. That, to my delegation, also provides a safeguard for all of us, as it would keep the discussion on Council reform going. We must all bear in mind that reform is an ongoing process and must not be seen as an endgame in itself. In that regard, we look forward to future negotiations to be held at the intergovernmental level in an open, transparent and inclusive manner.

Mr. Maema (Lesotho): At the outset, let me express my gratitude to the President of the Security Council for this month, Mr. Marty Natalegawa, Permanent Representative of Indonesia, for his informative presentation of the annual report on the work of the Security Council.

The delegation of Lesotho aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Angola on behalf of the African Group.

My delegation has noted with great appreciation the increase in the number of open and public debates held by the Security Council during the reporting period. We see that as a positive measure that the Council took to improve its transparency as well as its effectiveness. However, such a measure does not respond to the call that was made to the Council by world leaders at the 2005 World Summit to enhance its accountability to the entire membership of the United Nations. In our view, the effectiveness and transparency of the Council would be enhanced by the presentation to the General Assembly of reports that are more informative, particularly with regard to decisions taken by the Council. In addition, my delegation maintains the view that, to enhance its effectiveness, the Security Council should maintain a clear focus only on those issues that fall within its mandate and avoid encroaching on those issues that fall within the mandates of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

The issue of the working methods of the Security Council is of great importance to my delegation. We appreciate the proposal made by the group of five small nations (S-5) in that regard. We recognize that it seeks to ensure better access to the work of the Council for those States that are not members, particularly developing countries. Accordingly, my delegation remains convinced that the working methods are an essential and integral part of Security Council reform and as such should remain part of the reform package. We assert that access to the work of the Council per se would not address the issue of the legitimacy of the decisions of the Council.

As the report of Security Council that is now under consideration has highlighted, in the past year, as in previous years, the Security Council focused mostly on Africa, and yet Africa's representation in the Security Council does not even come close to reflecting the continent's interests and perceptions. That is the unacceptable status quo that the common African Position, as contained in the Ezulwini Consensus and in the Sirte Declaration, seeks to address. Indeed, as has been attested to by many, the common African Position is driven not by the interests of one country, but by a strong desire to empower a region facing the most crises relating to international peace and security.

Deliberations in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council have continued for more than a decade without any concrete results. We are grateful that, during the sixty-first session, the President of the General Assembly, Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, with her able leadership and skill, was able to rekindle the process. Allow me at this juncture to commend the five facilitators and the two ambassadors who assisted President Al Khalifa in conducting fruitful consultations that were able to stimulate active discussions on that important issue.

As we move into the next phase, my delegation wishes to pledge its full support and cooperation to the President of the General Assembly. It is our fervent hope that the process will be inclusive, transparent and results-oriented. We recall that, at the 2005 World Summit, the heads of State and Government stressed the need for the urgent reform of the Council and for the Council to be broadly representative and more legitimate.

Mr. Khazaee (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, I wish to extend our appreciation to the President of the General Assembly for convening this joint debate and to thank the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, the President of the Security Council, for presenting the annual report of the Council to the General Assembly today.

The report at hand contains certain information on the work of the Council, but falls short of referring to the cases in which the Council failed to take action on situations that required its attention and intervention. We have noted that the format of the present report is similar to that of last year and has yet to fully meet the expectations of the States members of the General Assembly.

Apart from a few steps taken in the past several years, the working methods of the Council have not undergone major improvements, despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of the Member States have been calling for genuine transparency and real changes in the Council's working methods and decision-making processes for the past several decades.

The failure of the Council to improve its image and credibility in the eyes of the general membership, as well as international public opinion, lies mostly in the manner in which it functions. There have been plenty of instances when the Council has failed to honour its responsibility as regards the rights of non-members. They include, among others, refusing to allow non-Council members to participate in discussions on matters affecting them, in total disregard of Article 31 of the Charter; denying the right of the concerned countries to brief the Council on their positions on issues having a direct effect on their national interest; pursuing a trend of selective notification of meetings of the Council; failing to convene daily briefings; and restricting the participation of the general membership in some open debates.

Moreover, disturbing trends, such as quick and unnecessary resort to Chapter VII of the Charter and the threat or use of sanctions in cases in which no action has even been necessary, have all adversely affected the credibility and legitimacy of the Council. More alarming are the various cases in which certain permanent members of the Council have attempted to downgrade that body into a mere tool of their foreign policy.

Indeed, impartiality, transparency and fairness are key premises on which the Security Council should base its approach in discharging its Charter-mandated responsibilities. Yet, missing from many of the Council's approaches and decisions are exactly the same essential and key factors. To increase the transparency of its work and improve its working methods, the Council should take into serious consideration the relevant provisions of the Charter, as well as the resolutions that clarify its relationship with the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations.

In recent years, we have witnessed the increasing trend of the Council's encroachment on the prerogatives of other main organs of the United Nations, particularly those of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and their subsidiary bodies. Despite the rejection of that trend by the great majority of Member States, we nevertheless saw the Council enter a new and alarming phase, and attempts made to shift issues on the agenda of the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council to the Security Council, during the period under review. For us, as for many other Member States, that trend is unacceptable and such attempts should be checked and reversed.

Norm-setting and law-making by the Security Council are yet another increasing trend that runs counter to the letter and spirit of the United Nations Charter. In accordance with the Charter, the General Assembly, as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations — and not the Security Council — is primarily entrusted with the task of the progressive development and codification of international law.

Equally disturbing is the fact that, during the period under review, the Council has been, on the one hand, rendered incapacitated in certain cases where action has been really and urgently needed, such as the Israeli atrocities against the Palestinian, Lebanese and other peoples in the region, while, on the other, it has been pushed to take unwarranted and unlawful action on issues that posed no threat to international peace and security and presented no reason for the Council to be involved.

The period under review is marked by the continued inaction of the Council with regard to the Zionist regime's crimes against the Palestinian people, and yet again another draft resolution in that regard was vetoed by the United States. Furthermore, the Council was prevented from considering, let alone taking any action on the acknowledgement by the Israeli regime's Prime Minister that his regime possesses nuclear weapons, while the said regime's nuclear arsenal poses one of the most serious threats to regional and international peace and security, and the international community expected and continues to expect the Council to take appropriate action in that regard.

The Security Council also failed to address the abduction by the United States of five Iranian consulate officers in Erbil, Iraq, although that was a flagrant violation of some of the most fundamental provisions of international law.

In the period under review, in a politically-motivated move orchestrated by a few of its permanent members, the Security Council took unlawful, unnecessary and unjustifiable action in adopting resolutions against the Islamic Republic of Iran over its peaceful nuclear programme, which presents no threat to international peace and security. Indeed, the Council's actions were taken against the Iranian nation only because it has decided to exercise its inalienable right to peaceful uses of nuclear technology, as enshrined in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Such actions were taken despite Iran's full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the latter's assertion that it has not seen any indication of diversion in Iran's peaceful nuclear programme.

We are of the view that the Council's actions on Iran's peaceful nuclear programme are unlawful and run counter to the provisions of the United Nations Charter. They are unlawful because, first and foremost, Iran's nuclear programme is absolutely peaceful; it cannot be characterized as a threat to peace by any stretch of law, fact or logic and therefore does not fall within the Council's purview. Moreover, In accordance with article 24 of the Charter, the Council should act on behalf of the United Nations Member States. However, with regard to Iran's peaceful nuclear programme, not only has the Council not been acting on behalf of the international community, but it has acted contrary to the positions of the overwhelming majority of Member States, including the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement and the member countries of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which have clearly supported Iran's right to peaceful nuclear technology and emphasized that the

IAEA is the sole competent body to deal with such issues.

Therefore, there is every reason to assert that Iran's peaceful nuclear programme does not fall within the purview of the Security Council, and the referral of that issue to the Security Council, as well as the Council's subsequent actions in that regard, fail to meet the minimum standards of legality. In fact, the right path for the issue goes through dialogue and technical elaboration within its proper and legal context, which is the framework of the IAEA.

Before concluding, I wish to briefly address the issue of the reform of the Security Council. We express our appreciation to the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session and to the facilitators appointed by her for their tireless efforts to move the reform process and the work of the Working Group on the reform of the Security Council forward. We will continue to actively support the efforts of the current President of the General Assembly in that respect at this session, and hope that those efforts will lead to concrete steps with regard to the long-awaited reform of the Security Council.

Clearly, despite the extensive debates in the Open-ended Working Group over the past 14 years, no significant progress has been made on the substantive aspects of the Council's reform, such as its size and composition, as well as the veto power. We concur with the view that the composition of the Security Council does not represent the realities of the world today, and that this issue should be thoroughly addressed and resolved in any meaningful reform of the United Nations. In our view, a meaningful reform of the Council will be possible only by creating a situation in which the question of underrepresentation of developing countries in the Council is seriously dealt with and the question of representation for nearly 1.5 billion Muslims is adequately and satisfactorily addressed.

Undoubtedly to restore its credibility and to become more democratic, representative and accountable, the Security Council should undergo serious reforms in terms not only of the question of its membership, but also in other crucial areas, such as its agenda, working methods and decision-making process.

Mrs. Gallardo Hernández (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): El Salvador welcomes the initiative of the President of the General Assembly of convening this new debate on agenda items 9, "Report of the Security Council", and 122, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters".

The report of the Security Council, introduced by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, whom we thank, attests to the close relationship that should exist between the Council and the General Assembly, pursuant to paragraph 1 of Article 15 and paragraph 3 of Article 24 of the United Nations Charter, which require the Council to submit reports for the Assembly's consideration.

In my delegation's view, however, the submission of the report, while providing a valuable opportunity to continue promoting inter-organ dialogue and cooperation between the General Assembly and the Security Council, as well as the other principal organs of the Organization, highlights the need for the Secretariat to make a greater effort with respect to drafting a report that has more analytical content that would allow us to assess the Council's activities. We believe that, within the framework of the relationships of the Security Council, we should not overlook the appropriate relationship that exists with the Peacebuilding Commission.

Despite the various positions expressed, my delegation believes that the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council offers new prospects for a more substantive dialogue on that issue. Thus, to the extent that flexibility exists among the various positions, we feel that, with the help of the facilitators, it may be possible to embark on a process of intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform.

However, such negotiations must be based on a text containing specific proposals, for there are still unresolved issues, such as categories of members, the question of the veto, the question of equitable geographical representation and the Council's working methods.

Throughout the process, El Salvador has advocated more active participation in the enlargement of the category of permanent and non-permanent members. Likewise, the revision and updating of the Council's working methods continues to be of importance in the setting of Security Council reform, a topic that embodies elements on which it should be possible to reach preliminary agreements.

My country recognizes the impetus given to Security Council reform, which has enabled Member States to consider innovative proposals, including the transitory or intermediary approach, consisting of the quest for a compromise solution reflecting the current geopolitical situation, and which would make it possible to overcome the stagnation that, as we all know, is affecting this topic.

In my delegation's view, the presidency of the sixty-second session could play a significant role in convening — and providing leadership in the short term — an intergovernmental negotiating process on Security Council reform that would take into account the progress made during the last session. In this regard, it is appropriate to reaffirm that speedy reform of the Security Council is an essential element in the overall endeavour to renew the United Nations so that it has broader representativity, is more efficient and transparent and sees its legitimacy strengthened in the implementation of its decisions.

Clearly, the current situation of the international system, in particular the question of collective security, is no longer in keeping with the structures for the promotion and defence of international peace and security erected in 1945. Therefore, as we have said before, a change in those structures is required so that they may reflect more objectively the new balances of power and the regional and international geopolitical reality.

In this regard, my delegation believes that more attention should be paid to the question of the veto, given its sui generis nature and the fact that it is in itself the main key to achieving substantial progress in other related areas. The same applies to the question of categories of members, including an increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent members; the proposal to consider equitable geographical representation; and possible regional representation.

El Salvador regards it as essential to increase the representation of Latin America and the Caribbean on the Security Council, and it has sympathy with consideration being given to the just aspirations of Africa in this respect.

In conclusion, I repeat that El Salvador is committed to supporting this process, in which we offer our active participation, until the successful conclusion of the task, which we hope will be as soon as possible.

Mr. Chidyausiku (Zimbabwe): My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by Ambassador Gaspar Martins of Angola on behalf of the African Group.

We thank Ambassador Natalegawa of Indonesia, President of the Security Council for November, for his informative presentation on the work of the Security Council over the 12 months of the reporting period.

We also commend the efforts to move forward the Security Council reform process by the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, and her facilitators in the Open-ended Working Group.

The report this year again has a format and approach very similar to the previous year's. We call upon the Security Council to submit a more comprehensive and analytical annual report to the General Assembly, assessing the Council's work. In this regard, we again underscore the need for full respect for the functions and powers of the principal organs of the United Nations, in particular the General Assembly. We are very much disturbed by the encroachment of the Security Council on the work of other principal organs of the United Nations and their subsidiary bodies.

Zimbabwe welcomes the opportunity to participate in this debate on the important question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council. The debate offers us a timely opportunity not only to take stock of and monitor our progress, but also to pronounce ourselves on and exchange views that may very well facilitate greater understanding of various positions in our efforts to move the process forward. Zimbabwe's position is guided by the African common position enunciated in the Ezulwini Consensus.

My delegation is greatly encouraged by the growing acceptance of and agreement on the need for expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of the Council's membership. An expanded Council will enjoy fresh perspectives in its deliberations and broader alliances in its decision-making, which is, after all, the purpose of our exercise: to make the Council more representative, legitimate and credible.

With regard to the way forward, Zimbabwe is of the view that expansion in both categories is essential to meet the needs and views of a vast majority of Member States. It is also essential to maintain a balanced ratio between the two categories of the Council's membership.

In this connection, Zimbabwe, like many other Member States, has constantly advocated comprehensive reform of the Council. We have underscored time and again the need for it to reflect the current political realities, with special emphasis on granting developing countries, in particular those in the African continent, their long overdue deserved representation in both categories of the Council.

In this regard, I reiterate my country's support for Africa's unwavering demand for two permanent seats, with the same powers and prerogatives as those of the current members, and five non-permanent seats in the expanded Council. We feel that these are reasonable demands, based on the principle of democratic representativity on a proportional basis among regions.

We are of the firm belief that United Nations reform without Security Council reform is incomplete. Reform of the working methods of the Council alone is again not enough, and structural reforms are therefore needed to complete the process. A less skewed and more balanced power structure in the Security Council, coupled with more democratic global governance institutions, is what the international community needs to be able to deliver in the important areas of security and economic and social development.

It is important that the interests of all countries and regions on this sensitive issue be seriously taken into account. In this regard, transparency and consensus must remain the custodians of our mutual trust and confidence on this issue.

For its part, Zimbabwe is ready to work together with other members in order to achieve comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti): My delegation is pleased to participate in this joint debate on agenda items 9 and 122, relating to the report of the Security Council and the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

Djibouti aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Angola on behalf of the African Group and by the representative of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

At the outset, I express our gratitude to the Council and the Secretariat for their commendable efforts in the preparation of this year's report, which, as in previous years, portrays an array of issues considered and decisions taken, as well as their intensity and variety. Over the last decade, the transparency of the Council's work has been on the rise, and the Council needs to be encouraged to do more; the wider membership still finds the consultation process quite sketchy.

The holding once a month of thematic debates on a variety of topics, ranging from global and gender issues to regional issues, has been found useful, as such debates enable members of the Council to exchange views with the wider membership of the United Nations and relevant organizations. It needs to be stressed, however, that this exercise, though commendable, may sometimes stray into areas that are within the purview or responsibility of other United Nations bodies. The Council must resist the temptation to encroach upon the mandates of other United Nations organs.

The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council seems only to rise in gravity with each passing day. The pace at which significant developments occur around the globe today is often unnerving, particularly when seen against the snail's pace of evolution in the international governance mechanisms — the Security Council, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, to mention just the key ones.

Conflicts within States remain a prime danger, given the number of people and resources involved, and the impact such conflicts have on States in a region. There is a legitimate concern as well about what former Secretary-General Kofi Annan described as focusing so much on hard threats, forgetting the soft threats, which can equally be disruptive — such as the fight against poverty, the HIV epidemic, environmental degradation, inequality and the desperation some people live under.

If the world is to act collectively against the prevailing dangers and threats, perhaps the only viable mechanism available to nations, and one which confers legitimacy, is the United Nations. When action is to be taken in conflict situations that pose threats to international peace and security, the Security Council is expected to respond promptly, adequately and in a non-discriminatory and non-selective manner.

In this respect, the Security Council as constituted today is not a representative body; rather, it continues in the shadow of the Second World War. There has been little or no change in its structure or power base, particularly on such issues as permanent membership or veto privileges, since its inception. Surely, there is an urgent need for an inclusive, transparent and democratic Council that takes seriously into consideration the interests of both developed and developing States. The membership and composition of the Council must reflect today's global political and economic realities if it is to slow the erosion of legitimacy it suffers, given the vast numbers of excluded peoples, States and regions.

Security Council reform is currently stalemated, not because of one country, one group or one region, but because of the growing hardening of positions by all. Briefly, the positions of major interest groups are as follows.

We all know about the unyielding stance of the five permanent members on the issue of the veto, and to a lesser extent on the composition and size of the Council. In conformity with the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, Africa is asking for not fewer than two permanent seats, with all the prerogatives and privileges of permanent membership, including the right of veto, in addition to five non-permanent seats.

On the other hand, the countries of the Group of Four — Brazil, Germany, India and Japan — propose to postpone the extension of veto privileges to new permanent members, and instead suggest revisiting this issue at a later date, perhaps after a decade or so, through a review process.

The Uniting for Consensus group is categorical on the increase of permanent seats, as advocated by others, and has proposed variations and options, but rigorously advocates increasing the non-permanent category for the time being, in the absence of agreement on the permanent category.

It was against the backdrop of these ever-widening divergences that, thanks to the remarkable persistence of the President at the sixty-first Session, wide-ranging consultations on all aspects of Council reform were undertaken through facilitators whose bold, analytical and creative variety of options, approaches and formulations attempted to breathe new life into the negotiations. Throughout the entire process, the facilitators intensified efforts to achieve substantive breakthroughs on all the five themes under discussion: size of an enlarged Council; categories of membership; question of regional representation; question of the veto; and the Council's working methods. The President mandated the facilitators to conduct open, transparent and inclusive consultations, with a view to making the most accurate assessment possible of the state of play on Security Council reform.

At the outset, we all agreed that maintaining the status quo was unacceptable, regardless of the theme. We further felt that flexibility on all themes by all members was the key to achieving tangible results. It was also underscored that during this exercise we should always bear in mind that any enlargement of the Council should address the under-representation of developing countries as well as of small States.

So, over the course of the following several months in 2007, the facilitators engaged in comprehensive and far-reaching consultations on all themes and all aspects of Council reform. The most interesting idea the facilitators proposed related to the notion of a transitional approach, whereby issues not agreed upon could be deferred to a review process at a predetermined date, while Member States would continue to retain their initial positions. This so-called intermediary arrangement may sound fine when taken at face value, but in reality it suffers from an oversimplification of the prevailing profound differences.

In place of achieving concrete progress now, through hard choices and compromises, the proposal is to consider a mandatory review as a solution to our stalemate. In effect, this means that whatever cannot be negotiated today will be deferred to the review, and none of the stakeholders will have to give up their original positions. Let us heed the well-tested saying, "Do not put off until tomorrow what you can do today".

Our colleagues who succeed us tomorrow will grapple with the review process only to discover that we had indeed abdicated our responsibilities to deal effectively with the crucial issues at the right time. We therefore fully support the continuation of negotiations at this session, building upon the work done in previous sessions, in particular the last one, with a view to achieving progress on all aspects of Security Council reform, as an integral part of the United Nations reform process.

Finally, our goal remains that of a safe world in which conflict is prevented before it erupts and causes incalculable destruction and loss of life. Many regions in the world, including the Horn of Africa, are beset by conflict and suffer from neglect and inattention. Some of the wars have lasted a long time, thus creating a generation of armed, uneducated and hopeless youth. The result has been State failures, endemic poverty, violence, instability, social disintegration and the collapse of governance. Such dysfunctional States also pose other threats, as potential breeding grounds of lawlessness and terrorism, and other kinds of crimes.

Obviously, the Council needs to demonstrate greater sensitivity towards poor countries embroiled in brutal conflicts. Those States require urgent attention in peacemaking and peacekeeping considerations. Closely related to this topic are post-conflict peacebuilding commitments, which so far remain fragile, with mixed results.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.